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THE NEW APPRECIATION OF THE BIBLE

A STUDY OF THE SPIRITUAL OUTCOME OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

By
WILLARD CHAMBERLAIN SELLECK, D.D.
Author of *The Spiritual Outlook: A Survey of the Religious Life of Our Time as Related to Progress*

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To My Wife

COMPANION OF MY AFFECTIONS AND JOYS
SHARER OF MY STRUGGLES AND HOPES
THE KINDEST AND BEST OF ALL MY CRITICS
IN WHOSE LIFE AND CHARACTER
SIMPLE, UNSELFISH, AND SINCERE
THE SPIRIT OF THE MASTER'S TEACHING HAS BEEN
BEAUTIFULLY REFLECTED

I Inscribe This Volume

WITH GRATEFUL AND TENDER FEELINGS

PREFACE

The author's aim has been to prepare a manual that might be distinctly helpful to those who desire to appropriate the best results of modern biblical scholarship. He has had in mind the needs of pastors, teachers, young people's classes and societies in the churches, parents, and thoughtful persons generally who really want to know the truth, but who want also a justly constructive interpretation and application of the truth. He believes thoroughly that the new view of the Bible is far more vital than the old; that there is no valid cause for alarm lest the essentials of spiritual religion suffer shock, through the acceptance of this view, provided the people are adequately informed and wisely led; but that, on the contrary, it may be made to promote a great enlightenment and enrichment of popular faith and devotion, if only those who are responsible for the instruction of the masses shall conscientiously do their duty. He holds, therefore, that the imperative need of the hour is intelligent, sympathetic, and frank explanation and guidance with reference to the manifold interests involved in this whole subject.

The religious use of the Bible must always be its principal use. The value it possesses for the linguist, the archæologist, and the historian,

great as this has been and will continue to be, can never equal the worth of its service to the spiritual life of mankind. People may read it for literary profit, and may study it for the sake of knowledge and culture; but all this will be as nothing beside the counsel, comfort, inspiration, correction, and direction which it will afford for moral conduct and religious trust. *But this most important use of the Bible must be consonant with the truth about its nature;* and the more vital its hold upon the hearts of men, the more powerful its influence in practical life, the more needful it must be that its real character should be clearly understood. Accordingly the common people, who are fed by the Bible and are exhorted to use it diligently in religious ways, are entitled to know, so far as possible, what the scholars have learned respecting its actual origin and history. To withhold such information will not only deprive them of an education to which they have a just claim, but will be sure to beget distrust and indifference.

Now a part of the work of furnishing this needed popular instruction is to be done by the biblical professor, but perhaps an equally important part is to be done by the enlightened pastor. He stands close to the ordinary people; he knows the state of their minds, he can sympathize with their perplexities and misgivings,

and therefore he can break the bread of truth to them according to their needs. Himself learning from the experts or the teachers in the universities, he can in turn teach the members of his congregation who look to him for leadership in spiritual things; and thus he may be the mediator of a new understanding between the Divine Spirit and those yearning souls that wait for illumination "more than they that watch for the morning."

The point of view here indicated is the one from which the present volume is offered. It will be seen, therefore, that the book is not intended for scholars, but is rather a modest attempt by a working pastor to popularize some of the results of scholarship. It seeks to give the general reader a clear and trustworthy account of the changed view of the Bible which is growing up in these days, and to show him that this view does not weaken the hold of the Scriptures upon our esteem, but instead truly strengthens it, while tending positively to spiritualize and vitalize our religion. Even more earnestly does it strive to set forth the great educational value of the Bible in our modern life, as it acts upon the heart of our civilization, and to point out the ways in which it may be most helpfully used, in its new aspects, in order to render its vast service of good to the individual and to society.

Of course the author does not presume to speak for any particular scholar, except as indicated by quotation or reference. The facts herein set forth are such as he has gleaned in his professional study, and he alone is responsible for the form in which he has stated them; but he trusts he has not misrepresented, in any essential respect, the position of modern learning in relation thereto. As to the convictions which he has expressed regarding the nature and workings of religion, most fully contained in the sixth, seventh, and eighth chapters of the first part, they are emphatically his own, although the influence of many teachers has combined with his own thought and experience to produce them.

The writer fervently hopes that a sympathetic reading of these pages will yield the net result of a quickened apprehension of spiritual truth. Believing profoundly in the immanence of the Divine Spirit, of whose active presence in our human world the Bible is a great monument, he believes that a truer knowledge of the Bible must always make men more clearly aware of the reality and the immediateness of the spiritual forces that fill the universe, thereby bringing them into a deeper conscious harmony with

> That God which ever lives and loves,
> One God, one law, one element,
> And one far-off divine event,
> To which the whole creation moves.

PROVIDENCE, R. I.
February 1, 1906

W. C. S.

POSTSCRIPT

The author's indebtedness to various writers is perhaps sufficiently indicated by the quotations and references in the text and the footnotes. But he desires especially to acknowledge his obligation to one of the professors in the University of Chicago, who, after reading the manuscript for the press, kindly submitted many sympathetic and helpful criticisms. The corrections and suggestions thus recommended have been substantially incorporated in the final revision of the work, much enhancing its value.

The book has been produced amid the multifarious duties of a double pastorate, involving the constant care of a city church and a suburban village church, not to speak of many other semi-public services. On the score of this fact some allowance may be made for the lack of literary finish and technical soundness which the critical reader will undoubtedly discover. It is hoped that such defects will not be so great as seriously to impair the practical usefulness of the volume.

W. C. S.

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INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE IN MODERN LIFE

INTRODUCTION

THE BIBLE IN MODERN LIFE

The place which the Bible already fills in modern life is so large and honorable as to entitle it to the profound respect of all intelligent people. The still larger place which it is both worthy and certain to occupy in the future development of our civilization renders exceedingly important a most thorough consideration of every vital question connected with its nature and influence. It is impossible to understand the history of this civilization without knowing how the teachings of the Bible have been wrought, like a beautiful pattern, into its very warp and woof. It is likewise impossible to think of this civilization extending itself among the nations, in the immediate future, without involving these same teachings. Therefore it is not merely in a narrow, personal way, as concerning the religious interests of the individual, but rather in a very broad way, as flowing with the whole stream of our western civilization, now spreading over the earth, that we are adequately to measure the significance of the Bible in modern life. A few considerations will enforce this truth.

1. Beginning with ourselves, we perceive at once that our private spiritual ideals, our ethi-

cal principles, our religious faith and devotion, and our hopes for the hereafter have been largely shaped by the ideas and influences emanating from this sacred volume. One may not claim that they have been *produced* thereby, for spiritual aspiration, the moral sense, and the religious sentiment are afforded by the nature of man, are instinctive and ineradicable; but it is a fact that they have taken form and direction, as they exist among us, from the molding hand which the Bible has laid upon our souls. For every man shares, consciously or unconsciously, in the heritage of the past. Now our entire western civilization, which is comparatively of recent origin, has grown up in the closest connection with those agencies and forces which the Bible has fostered and transmitted, so that our ancestors, for hundreds of years, as well as we ourselves, have been educated in its conceptions and spirit: consequently the impression which it has made upon our habits of thought and feeling, upon conduct and character, is as deep, vital, and permanent as that which is produced upon a race by climate or long-established national government. Thus the influence of the Bible is felt in our lives, both directly and indirectly, to a greater extent than the unreflecting are aware. When we think of it, however, we see that it would be about as difficult to free ourselves from its effectual sway as to take the texture out of

a garment; and even if we possessed the desire and the ability to do this, it is quite as difficult to imagine what should or could be put in its place. No wonder we call the book sacred! for all our most sacred interests, whether drawn from the past or subsisting in the present or pertaining to the future, are bound up with its life-giving teachings. It is the light, the inspirer, and the comforter of our needy souls as nothing else on earth has ever been. Intelligently cherished, it is simply an inestimable means of spiritual grace and power, working silently, day by day, like the sunshine, to enrich and beautify our lives.

2. Similarly the Bible has entered into modern literature in penetrating and thorough ways. Hosts of the greatest writers of the last thousand years have fed upon the Bible as upon no other work. Innumerable are the allusions to it, the quotations from it, and the illustrations afforded by it in the literary productions of European and American authors.[1] How futile, then, to expect to understand these authors with-

[1] The late Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, shortly before his death, wrote touching this point as follows: "Wholly apart from its religious or from its ethical value, the Bible is the one book that no intelligent person who wishes to come into contact with the world of thought and to share the ideas of the great minds of the Christian era can afford to be ignorant of. All modern literature and all art are permeated with it. There is scarcely a great work in the language that can be fully understood and enjoyed without this knowledge, so full is it of allusions and illustrations from the Bible. This is true of fiction, of poetry, of economic and philosophic works, and also of the scientific and even

out some familiarity with the Bible! In nearly all our best literary possessions originating in recent centuries the facts, thoughts, and lessons of the Bible are reflected here and there on every hand; and its general spirit is undoubtedly the most pervasive quality in the moral and intellectual atmosphere of our time. Hence, if we desire to interpret correctly the literary history of modern times, thus comprehending the inner workings of the human spirit lying behind our whole occidental civilization, we shall find it needful to put ourselves at the point of view occupied by so many writers through an enlightened appreciation of the Bible.

3. Again, consider how our institutional life recognizes and employs the Bible. Not only our churches with their assemblages and their ceremonies of worship, not only our marriage and funeral customs, but also most of our philanthropic agencies, many of our schools and colleges, and some of our civil laws and judicial proceedings have been fashioned and subserved, in no small degree, by these ancient Scriptures. It is not contended that such social institutions owe their existence primarily to the Bible, for they

agnostic treatises. It is not at all a question of religion, or theology, or of dogma; it is a question of general intelligence."

Emerson, too, wrote: "Shakespeare, the first literary genius of the world, the highest in whom the moral is not the predominating element, leans on the Bible; his poetry presupposes it. If we examine this brilliant influence—Shakespeare—as it lies in our mind, we shall find it reverent, not only of the letter of this book, but of the whole frame of society which stood in Europe upon it."

spring out of native instincts and tendencies, and there would be something like them even if there had never been any Bible; but the point is, that the Bible has had actually to do with their development, and so exerts its power through their far-reaching influence.

But the chief fact to be noted here is that the Bible is the specific and main instrument of all our distinctively religious institutions. What a striking phenomenon it is that every Christian church, every Young Men's or Young Women's Christian Association, and every Sunday school makes use of some portion of this book as the principal implement of spiritual culture! It is the sword of the Spirit wielded by the armies of the Lord—the one mighty weapon of offense and defense, to assail the works of ignorance and sin, and to keep every warrior's heart incorruptible and undefiled. It is the one great textbook of righteousness and holy love used throughout our western world for the education of old and young in the highest and most vital things in human life. No other tool ever had such honor, or wrought upon so gigantic a task, or accomplished such wonderful results. It is unique and marvelous as an instrumentality for the maintenance of all that is best in our modern civilization.

4. Furthermore, it must be observed that the Bible is now being rapidly distributed over the

earth. The vast missionary enterprises of the various churches, springing up in the nineteenth century, have been inaugurated in nearly all lands, among hundreds of millions of people who, a short time ago, knew nothing of Judaism and Christianity. Invariably the Bible has accompanied these enterprises, without which they had never been undertaken, and by virtue of which they have constantly subsisted. As a consequence of this Christian expansion, aided by the growth of learning and by other important factors, the Scriptures have now attained a circulation among the races and languages of the globe far surpassing that of any other collection of writings. Last year, for instance, the circulation of the American Bible Society alone amounted to 1,723,791 copies, and during the eighty-six years of its organization amounted to 70,677,225; while the British and Foreign Bible Society reported a circulation last year of 5,067,421 copies, and a total since the foundation of the society of 175,038,965. There are other societies engaged in distributing the Bible, but I am unable to give their figures; and while it is impossible to make any accurate estimate of the total circulation throughout the world, a trustworthy authority says it would probably reach 500,000,000. This means that the Bible has been translated into many languages and dialects—over 300—and that the demand for it is

steadily increasing. Surely, if the Bible conveys to mankind a knowledge of God, it is not difficult to believe in the ultimate fulfilment of the old Hebrew prophecy—"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea."[2]

Seeing thus the remarkable place which the Bible occupies in modern life, and which it is destined to enlarge, the highest significance at once attaches to the fact that *the general view of the Bible hitherto prevailing is undergoing a great change in these days.* The recent vast expansion of learning, and the many searching corrections effected by it, constitute one of the most notable achievements of our civilization. Few subjects have been affected by the twofold process more thoroughly and helpfully than the Bible. Light from various quarters has been thrown upon its pages, researches in the ancient lands connected with its origin have been made, and studies in the historic circumstances attending its production and transmission have been patiently prosecuted, all contributing to render the Bible a much richer book for us than it could possibly have been for our forefathers. But it is also a different book, in the sense of bearing a different nature. It is no longer regarded in so narrow and mechanical a way as formerly; it is less a mysterious oracle, and more a living

[2] Isa. xi. 9.

voice; and if we use it less as a talisman or shibboleth, we feel it more as a throbbing energy in the struggling life of our time. We do not think of it as having been written by the Almighty, or by angels, or by infallible human amanuenses; but rather as having grown out of the personal and national experiences of a people who were wonderfully fitted by racial endowment and by a long, peculiar discipline to feel and express profound moral and religious truths. The steps by which it came into existence can be traced to a great extent, the stages of its development can be marked off with approximate accuracy; and we see that whatever divine element is involved in its creation is just such as we ourselves may know something about in our purest spiritual consciousness—the presence and power of the spirit of God working in and through the spirit of man "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So the marvelous in the sense of the miraculous diminishes, and the marvelous in the sense of the natural increases.

This fundamental change in our general conception of the Bible will be elucidated and amplified. Here let me simply remark that the facts and truths involved in it are embraced in what is called the science of historical and literary criticism, and more particularly in the branch of this science known as biblical criti-

cism. This new science, which is giving us largely a new Bible, is creating a new interest among intelligent people in the study of the precious volume; and I venture to hope that we are on the eve of a better and more diligent use of these sacred writings for vital purposes than has yet prevailed. To those who have eyes to see the trend of spiritual events, the inevitable improvement that must ensue from such enlightening and vivifying influences is indeed a gladdening vision. Therefore they welcome this modern science of biblical criticism as a radiant, beautiful benefactress, like so many of her predecessors in the sisterhood of sciences, and rejoice to receive her blessing.

We are bound, however, to recognize the prevalence of a contrary judgment. There are those who are hostile to this science, deeming it a source of great evil. They hold it responsible for disturbing the faith of earnest Christians, for undermining the foundations of religious institutions, for depleting the churches, and for setting people adrift upon a sea of uncertainty, skepticism, and secularism. Nor can we deny that there is some truth in these allegations. Every great change in religious thought produces, inevitably, important personal and social consequences. To alter men's ruling ideas about the Bible, or the Church, or Jesus Christ, or God, or human destiny must affect their prac-

tical attitude toward all Christian interests. And undoubtedly the manifold changes now occurring in popular thought are having a considerable influence upon the conduct of large numbers of men and women with reference to public worship, the observance of Sunday, the reading of the Scriptures, and religious matters in general.

But it is a mistake to suppose that these changes are due solely or chiefly to biblical criticism; that is only one of the causes. They belong to the whole intellectual and spiritual movement of the age; all the other sciences have contributed to them; the general progress of civilization lies behind them and is implicated in them. It is likewise a mistake to suppose that their influence is, on the whole, baneful. It is no more so than that of all knowledge, freedom, and growth. There are incidental losses in every form of human advancement—from childhood to manhood, from dependence to self-reliance, from simplicity to complexity of social life; but these are more than offset by the gains which a natural development yields. If the world is now learning that some of its former conceptions of divine processes have been partially false because imperfect and narrow, and is therefore rectifying them, there will be, indeed, some evil results; but these will be more than counterbalanced by the immense benefits which

must eventually issue. At any rate, the process is going on, we cannot stop it, and we must prepare to accept the consequences, whatever they may be. It is pleasant to be able to believe that, in the main, they are sure to be good.

There is another serious aspect of this subject. The friends of Christianity who are mistakenly opposing biblical criticism are certain to alienate many thinking persons from the churches. This has been done already to a sad extent. There is good reason to believe that many bright young people, educated in our institutions of learning, are turning away from the churches today because of their intellectual inhospitality. Instead of finding them leaders of thought, they find them, too often, reluctant followers. Instead of seeing them expecting more light to break forth, more truth to be discovered, they behold them clinging to a revelation that is finished. Instead of being encouraged by them, as they are encouraged at college, to think, to examine, to investigate, and to explore with perfect fearlessness, and to welcome the established conclusions of scientific study, they are frequently warned against all this, and they hear unfavorable judgments pronounced upon the work of some of the world's greatest scholars. Thus, instead of being fellow-helpers to the truth, the churches often become a hindrance to its attainment. Manifestly this is very unfor-

tunate; and the churches are the principal sufferers. For no worse calamity could befall the Christian churches in our day than to lose the support of the thinking classes. And they will lose it, more or less, if this policy be continued. The hope that it will not be continued lies in the fact that, as a rule, highly educated men are increasingly demanded for the Christian ministry. Let the demand be insisted upon, and let the ministers, after they get into their pulpits, have as much confidence in the Spirit of Truth as they had while in the university. The Master promised that that Spirit should lead his disciples into all truth. Let them follow such a divine leadership, encourage their hearers to do likewise, prepare them to look for fresh disclosures of God's secrets, and honor all who in any way are seeking to discover them. So shall they help to make the Christian Church the staunch ally of all sound learning, and thereby save to her service the lovers of truth and progress.

I believe, then, that the gravest danger to be feared from biblical criticism today is, not that the acceptance of its teachings will undermine the faith of devout souls, but that the *rejection of its well-established results,* together with an attitude of unfriendliness toward all its work, will do the Christian Church incalculable harm through the alienation of vast numbers of

thoughtful, inquiring people. So believing, I desire, as a reverent and glad disciple of Jesus Christ, to do what I can to avert this danger from the great institution which serves the world in his name. Accordingly, with such ability as is at my disposal, I have undertaken a candid discussion of the matters here broached, in the firm conviction that the facts and truths which the scholars have brought to light, not only do *not* invalidate the most spiritual faith in the Bible and in Jesus Christ, but on the contrary greatly enhance such a faith. By showing how this is true, comprehensively and yet with some detail, and by such a course alone, can "the present distress" which Professor McFadyen [3] depicts be adequately relieved; only so can the churches again be duly enriched by the fruits of the new learning, and become thoroughly equipped for the stupendous tasks of a new age; and only so can we expect our historic religion to have its full share in the supreme work of spiritualizing our modern civilization.

[3] See John Edgar McFadyen, *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church* (Scribner, 1903), chap. i.

PART I

THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

In the present chapter a sketch is to be given of the history of the Bible. There is required at least an outline of the story of its preservation, transmission, and diffusion since the various writings composing it were collected, selected, and recognized as authoritative and sacred. The long process of thus gathering and establishing them, technically known as the formation of the Canon, constitutes a separate theme—preliminary, indeed, and of the greatest interest—but needing to be treated by itself. For the simple purpose, however, of tracing the principal steps by which we have come into possession of the English Bible of our own day, it is necessary to cover only the last fifteen or sixteen centuries. Accordingly, for convenience, let us go back to that important way-mark in Christian history, 325 A. D., which was signalized by the adoption of the Nicene Creed; and from this point of departure, looking before and after, we may see the main facts which we need to notice.

Back of the date here mentioned there lay nearly three hundred years of remarkable Christian activity following the death of Jesus, during which the gospel had spread abroad through the

greater portion of the civilized world, and at length had won recognition and acceptance by imperial Rome in the person of Constantine the Great, who had just come to the throne of the Caesars. The new religion had produced a fresh, strong literature, the best parts of which had been sifted out, gathered together, used and appealed to, in worship and teaching, by the general consensus of Christian opinion. This development had been slow and natural, and was not yet complete; in fact the final determination of the New Testament Canon, by ecclesiastical decree, did not occur until 495 A. D.[1] Yet, at the time we are considering, the chief of these select writings were already most highly esteemed, being regarded as very precious and practically of equal rank with the Old Testament. These last-named scriptures were produced within the fifteen centuries of Israelitish history which lay still farther back, before the time of Christ—indeed, the bulk of them within the second half of that period. They, likewise, had been sifted out and brought together—first, and gradually, into three distinct collections, and finally into a single collection; and toward the close of the period they had been translated into Greek for the use of Greek-speaking Jews, of whom there

[1] Professor Edward C. Moore, in a lecture. See especially his volume, *The New Testament in the Christian Church* (Macmillan, 1904), pp. 32, 33, 160–163. Very valuable.

were many at Alexandria and the other leading cities of the Graeco-Roman world.

Some of these sacred writings—possibly of both Testaments, and certainly of the Old—existed upon prepared skins, but most of them upon papyrus, a material introduced among the Greeks from the Egyptians several centuries previously. It consisted of sheets made from the *papyrus* plant, a species of bulrush found along the river Nile and also in Syria. The interior or pith of the stalk, after removing the rind, was cut into thin strips, which were laid lengthwise, side by side, and crosswise on top, and then while damp were pressed together, being rubbed even and smooth by some hard substance like bone or ivory. Upon that crude kind of "paper" (derived from this very word "papyrus") those precious words of religious thought and faith were inscribed with a sort of pen called a *stylus,* made from a reed. Obviously copies of the Scriptures, in whole or in part, must have been made quite frequently, in order both to preserve them and to circulate them among the churches.

After 325 A. D. a few events and developments took place which affected favorably the course of the Bible.

1. Christianity, being espoused by the emperor, immediately became honorable and powerful; its friends multiplied, its churches increased, and wealth began to flow to its support.

All this naturally augmented the demand for copies of the Scriptures. Constantine himself ordered no less than fifty for the churches of Constantinople alone.

2. The Christian writings, which had grown in importance until they had come to be as highly esteemed [2] for spiritual uses as those of the Old Testament, were now more frequently recorded upon parchment. This had the twofold effect of rendering the Scriptures more secure, and of facilitating the collection of the New Testament books into a single volume, which had been impracticable before because of the inconvenient size of the papyrus rolls.[3] At least two copies,

[2] "We have seen that it was upon the regular reading of the apostolic literature in the public services of the Christians for worship that the hallowing of this literature followed. The later generations would have said that they read these books because they deemed them inspired and sacred. So we say today. The earlier generations read them because the books told of Christ and took the place of the Apostles. They came to deem sacred and inspired, writings which did thus tell of Christ and take the place of the Apostles, and which they had been accustomed to read, along with the inspired writings of the Old Testament, in the services for public worship.

"Whatever literature was read in the leading Christian communities from Sunday to Sunday in the last decades of the second century, that, after a time, men came to regard as divine Scripture, being led up to that idea by the long process which we have reviewed. That high authority which they found this literature, for inward and spiritual reasons, to possess, they soon came to conceive in outward fashion, and to explain in the manner in which they had already reasoned concerning the authority of the Old Testament."—Professor E. C. Moore's *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, pp. 136, 137, 140, 141.

[3] "The elder of the church in Western Asia who arose in his congregation to read the letter of St. Paul which we know as the Epistle to the Ephesians, must have held in his hand a roll of white

Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, of the New Testament made shortly after this date, that is, made about the middle of the fourth century, were destined to survive until our own time.

3. Jerome was born 340 or 342 A. D., and died in 420. He became the leading Christian scholar of the Western Church, and at the suggestion of Pope Damasus devoted his abilities to the service of the Bible. He revised the existing Latin translation of the New Testament, rendered into Latin the Psalms from the Septuagint, and with the aid of a few Jewish rabbis executed a new translation of the remainder of the Old Testament directly from the Hebrew. This work, notwithstanding the papal sanction, encountered prolonged opposition from the conservative party in the Church. Nevertheless it won its way, and in the ninth century, after various modifications, superseded all other versions, being adopted with the utmost unanimity and praise, and having the title "Vulgate" transferred to it. It became the one authoritative ver-

or light yellow material about four feet in length and some ten inches in height. The Acts of the Apostles might have formed a portly roll of thirty feet, or might even have been divided into two or more sections. Even had the idea been entertained of making a collection of all the books which now form our New Testament, it would have been quite impossible to have combined them in a single volume, so long as papyrus was the material used." —Frederick G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 94.

sion for all the churches of western Europe until the Protestant Reformation.[4]

From about the middle of the fifth century onward for a thousand years, the Church of Rome was engaged in playing that conspicuous rôle which her bold ecclesiastical policy and the national changes occurring in Europe rendered possible. Under her administration Christianity was spread abroad with remarkable vigor and skill, and gradually won the allegiance of the great barbarian tribes—first of the Franks, and then of their German kinsmen; thus it became a powerful factor in the development of the modern European nations. Moreover, amid the ruins of the Roman Empire, this mighty Church stood for whatever of culture, order, reverence, and glory the word *civilization* could mean. It was not a time in which learning could thrive, for it was an era of turbulence resulting from the decay of the old paganism and the conflict of Christianity with the new barbarism. The knowledge of Greek had nearly died out, Latin was the language of the schools, the churches, and the courts, and new dialects were growing up here and there with the rise of new peoples. Yet a degree of scholarship was still main-

[4] "There were good reasons for the supremacy of the Vulgate. The devotions, the Canon Law, the liturgical usages of a thousand years, the universal value of Latin as the language of educated men, worked toward this end."—Professor Henry S. Nash, *The History of the Higher Criticism* (Macmillan, 1900), p. 23, note

tained, some attempts were made at popular instruction, and a few of the universities were founded that were destined to become great centers of learning. Above all, in the monasteries the monks were busy transcribing the books of the Bible, in order to meet the constant demand for copies of the Scriptures. They constituted a class of scribes, who made a special business of copying manuscripts, and they attained great skill in the art. Their work had to be done by hand, it required infinite care and patience, and at best many mistakes were inevitable. Some of the scribes illuminated and ornamented their copies, so as to render them beautiful; and occasionally kings or ecclesiastical dignitaries caused manuscripts to be made the letters of which, especially in the names of God and Christ, were covered with silver or gold. Sometimes, indeed, these were made with all the letters in gold, and were bound with plates of silver and gold, studded with jewels.[5]

This work of transcribing was not confined to the Latin language; translations were made into the various dialects with which Christianity had come into contact. A Catholic writer[6] in-

[5] "Beautiful manuscripts, finely written in golden letters upon thin parchment, were articles of pious luxury even in the fourth century."—Eduard W. E. Reuss, *History of the New Testament* (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1884), p. 385; translated by E. L. Houghton. See Book III for much valuable information on the above subject.

[6] Mr. L. A. Buckingham, *The Bible in the Middle Ages*, London, 1853.

stances sixteen of these translations into modern languages made between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries. But the vast majority of the copies of the Bible circulating in the West during this long period were in the Latin—sometimes made from the Old Latin version, sometimes from Jerome's translation, sometimes partly from each.

The process of copying the Scriptures was necessarily expensive. It required many small skins to yield sufficient parchment,[7] which itself was costly, and the task involved an immense amount of labor. In the uncial manuscripts each letter was a capital and had to be written separately; and although the cursive style of writing, mainly employed after the ninth century, was much more easy and rapid, still the copying of the whole Bible was a toilsome undertaking. It has been estimated that the cost of producing a complete copy of the Scriptures in this fashion at present would be at least one thousand dollars. Therefore only the more important books of the Bible, such as the gospels or the epistles of Paul, were extensively circulated during the Middle Ages, between the fifth and the twelfth centuries. Under the circumstances, however, these may be said to have had a wide reading, and doubtless many thousands of manuscripts,

[7] The size of the pages varied from $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ to $20 \times 13\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The number of sheets required to contain the entire Bible made a huge volume.

great and small, might have been found in the various churches, monasteries and university libraries, as well as in private hands, throughout mediæval Europe.

Approaching the era of the Protestant Reformation, we encounter a growing spirit of independence among the people, along with increasing corruptions on the part of the priests, monks, and higher ecclesiastics. A Christian heart-hunger craved the bread of life in the form of translations of the Bible into the mother-tongues of the different peoples, especially those of Teutonic stock. Various partial attempts were made in England to satisfy this desire, reaching from Cædmon's paraphrase of the Scripture narrative, written about 670, to the work of John Wycliffe in the fourteenth century. Wycliffe rendered the New Testament into English about 1380, and the Old Testament in 1382 or a little later. This was only a secondary translation from the Latin Vulgate, but it was a great and promising achievement.[8] Other influences were at work which were soon to produce important results. Among these was a reawakening of interest in the study of the Greek language and literature, as an outcome of the

[8] "This . . . . work was mainly executed by Wycliffe himself, but his friend Nicholas Hereford did part of the Old Testament. Afterwards the whole was revised by John Purvey, who assisted Wycliffe in his parish duty at Lutterworth, and finished his edition probably not long after the reformer's death" (1384).—*Encyclopædia Britannica,* Vol. XXIV, p. 710.

Crusades. More significant still was the invention of printing[9] in the fifteenth century, the service of which was to dispense with the laborious copying of manuscripts. Erasmus was born in 1467 and lived until 1536, and in the course of his career did more, perhaps, than any other man to sow the seeds of revolution by his biblical labors as well as by his writings. He became a critical scholar, was sometime professor of Greek in Cambridge, and published the New Testament in Greek with an improved Latin translation and comments. The first edition appeared in 1516, and several other editions, somewhat revised, in quick succession. The work created a furor everywhere and marked a new epoch in religious thought.[10]

At the same time, over on the Continent, Luther was drawing the thunderbolt out of the sky by defying the power of Rome, and the Protestant Reformation was immediately inaugurated. In his prison-retreat in the Castle of Wart-

[9] The first book printed in Europe was the Latin Bible, issued by Gutenberg in 1456, a copy of which is in the British Museum.

[10] "Never was volume more passionately devoured. A hundred thousand copies were soon sold in France alone. The fire spread as it spread behind Samson's foxes in the Philistines' corn. The clergy's skins were tender from long impunity. They shrieked from pulpit and platform, and made Europe ring with their clamor. The more loudly they cried the more Europe perceived the justice of their chastisement. The words of the Bible have been so long familiar to us that we can hardly realize what the effect must have been when the Gospel was brought out fresh and visible before the astonished eyes of mankind."—James Anthony Froude, *Life and Letters of Erasmus* (Scribner, 1894), p. 127.

burg he at once began the translation of the Bible into the German language, and, along with other arduous labors, continued indefatigably at this great task for nearly twenty-five years, comprising the publication and revision of successive editions of his work.[11]

Returning to England, we approach the developments which led directly to the production of the King James or Authorized Version of the Bible. We are not to think of this as the work of a single master-mind, or even as the unaided achievement of the particular group of scholars who finally gave it form. Behind it lay the labors of many toilers, covering nearly a century; indeed, if we include those of Wycliffe and his assistants, they extend over two and a quarter centuries. Foremost among all who contributed to the great result was William Tyndale, who doubly gave his life to the cause. He was born in 1484, was educated mainly at Oxford, but in 1510 was drawn to Cambridge by the fame of Erasmus, who was lecturing there.

[11] The New Testament was first issued at Wittenberg in September, 1522; the first complete Bible in 1534; a revised edition, with the co-operation of Melanchthon and other friends, in 1541; and still another revision in 1545. "Luther's Bible not only became the firmest support of the Reformation and the noblest monument of his own fame, but it is a national German work. . . . . Its language, happily rising out of Old German harshness, the best that Luther wrote, and surpassed by none of his contemporaries, sounded like a prophecy of a golden age of literature, and in manly vigor and anointing of the Holy Spirit it has ever remained a model unapproached."—E. W. E. Reuss, *History of the New Testament*, Vol. II, pp. 489, 490.

Doubtless the influence of this brilliant teacher helped him to resolve upon the undertaking to which he so earnestly devoted himself. After nearly ten years of precarious employment, and being convinced that he could not safely bring out his work at home, he left England in 1524 and went to Hamburg. Here he completed his translation of the New Testament, and the next year it was published at Worms.[12] Several revised editions appeared in the decade following, along with portions of the Old Testament. But he was not able to finish the latter before he was seized by order of the emperor and put to death as a heretic, in 1536.[13]

The year before Tyndale died Miles Coverdale translated the Bible from the Dutch (i. e., German) and Latin. It was printed abroad, but promptly appeared in England. While not actually authorized, the work had been produced with the sanction and support of Thomas Crom-

[12] "Money for the work had been found by a number of English merchants, and by their means the copies were secretly conveyed into England, where they were eagerly bought and read on all sides."—Frederick G. Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 212.

[13] The emperor was Charles V, ruler of Spain, Austria, and the Netherlands. Tyndale was residing in Antwerp at the time of his base betrayal in 1535. Being kidnapped, he was imprisoned at Vilworde, in Belgium. Henry VIII, king of England, did nothing to procure his release, and Cromwell, though sympathizing with the unfortunate man, could not save him. He was tried, convicted of heresy, and strangled to death, his body being burned, near Brussels, October 6, 1536. He died with the prayer on his lips, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!" The very next year Henry permitted Cranmer to circulate the Bible in England.

well, secretary of state and otherwise chief functionary under King Henry VIII, and was dedicated to the king. It was the first complete Bible printed in English, and the Psalms in it are those still used in the *Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England.* Two revised editions were issued in 1537, being "set forth with the King's most gracious license."

The demand for the Bible grew. A work known as "Matthew's Bible," which was really a completion of Tyndale's enterprise, was published in London in 1537, though printed probably in Antwerp. In 1539 Richard Taverner, an Oxford scholar, issued an independent translation. In the same year the "Great Bible," so called from its very large size, was brought out under the direction of Cromwell, who ordered a copy to be put in some convenient place in every church. This work was not a new translation, but a thorough revision, made by Coverdale, of Matthew's Bible. The edition of 1540 and subsequent editions contained a long preface by Archbishop Cranmer, whence it is often called "Cranmer's Bible."

But a reaction against Protestantism soon set in; and in 1543 all translations of the Bible bearing Tyndale's name were ordered destroyed, and three years later Coverdale's New Testament was joined in the same condemnation. "The public use of the English Bible was forbidden, and

copies were removed from the churches." A number of scholars, fleeing the country, found a welcome in Geneva, where Calvin and Beza were in the midst of their great work. Here was produced the important "Geneva Bible" which consisted of a careful revision of the Old Testament of the "Great Bible" and of Tyndale's last revision of the New Testament. This was published in 1560, and soon came to be the Bible of the household among English people. Its superiority incited a demand for a further revision of the "Great Bible" for use in the churches. Such a work, known as the "Bishops' Bible," was published in 1568, with a second edition in 1572. In 1582–1609 the Roman Catholics produced the Rheims and Douai Bible, which was a translation, not from the original Hebrew and Greek, but from the Latin Vulgate.

But there was still a call for improvement. The marginal comments in the Genevan Bible, which were of a Calvinistic tone, were objectionable to many, while other faults were pointed out by scholars. At a conference called by King James I, in 1604, the subject was brought up by Dr. Reynolds, President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, and a Puritan leader, who "moved his Majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reign of King Henry VIII and Edward VI were corrupt, and not answerable to the truth

of the original." [14] He was supported by Bishop Bancroft of London, and the king was interested; indeed, it was the latter who proposed the plan of procedure, namely: that the revision or translation should be made principally by the universities; that it should be approved by the bishops, by the Privy Council, and by the king himself; and that it should have no marginal commentary. A list of fifty-four distinguished scholars was approved for the task, and in 1607 they set to work, at least forty-seven of them. They were divided into six groups, sitting two at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. Taking the Bishops' Bible as a basis, they consulted and used to some extent the translations of Tyndale, Matthew, Coverdale, the "Great Bible," the Geneva Bible, and the Rheims and Douai Version. They were occupied laboriously for two years and nine months, the last nine months being given to the final revision by a committee of two from each of the six groups. The new translation was published in 1611, with a "Dedication to the King," and with a lengthy preface bestowing abundant praise upon him for his royal patronage, and explaining the principles and aims of the work. It was "appointed to be read in churches," and, though there is no record of any formal act of authorization, it at once superseded the Bishops' Bible and

[14] *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible*, 1893, p. 85.

grew in popular favor until it became the recognized Bible of the English people.

The interest which these various early translations into the vernacular awakened was intense. We in these calm, tolerant days may not easily conceive how matters then stood. Say what they will to the contrary, the Catholics did not want the common people to read the Bible. "Charles V and Philip II passed a decree which inflicted the punishment of death by burning on any in the Netherlands who presumed to read the Bible in any language which they could understand." [15] Likewise in England, "even under Henry VIII, it was a crime punishable with death to read the Bible in a language which they understood." [16] Consequently the people had known little about its precious contents; but now that it had become possible for them to read or hear it, they were profoundly stirred.

"Englishmen," says a scholar of the time, "were so eager for the gospel as to affirm that they would buy a New Testament even if they had to give a hundred thousand pieces of money for it." Bibles and pamphlets were smuggled over to England and circulated among the poorer and trading classes through the agency of an association of "Christian Brethren," consisting prin-

[15] Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Vol. I, pp. 73, 228; given by Archdeacon Farrar in *The Bible—Its Meaning and Supremacy*, p. 212.

[16] Farrar, *ibid.*, p. 324.

cipally of London tradesmen and citizens, but whose missionaries spread over the country at large.[17]

Notwithstanding the deep feeling thus everywhere manifested with reference to the Bible, the authorities opposed its popular use. When Tyndale's translation appeared in England, its destruction was promptly ordered, and thousands of copies were burned at the old cross of St. Paul's, as "a burnt offering most pleasing to Almighty God."[18] Bishop Tunstall and other bishops subscribed money to buy up all the copies they could get hold of; but this proceeding merely helped Tyndale to pay his debts and go

[17] J. R. Green, *History of the English People,* Vol. II, pp. 128, 129. After "Henry VIII at last permitted the English Bible to be published," says Taine, "everyone who could buy this book either read it assiduously, or had it read to him by others, and many well advanced in years learned to read with the same object. On Sunday the poor folk gathered at the bottom of the churches to hear it read. Maldon, a young man, afterwards related that he had clubbed his earnings with an apprentice to buy a New Testament, and that for fear of his father, they had hidden it in their straw mattress." Again he says: "Try to picture these yeomen, these shopkeepers, who in the evening placed this Bible on their table, and bareheaded, with veneration, heard or read one of its chapters. Think that they have no other books, that theirs was a virgin mind, that every impression would make a furrow, that the monotony of mechanical existence rendered them open to new emotions, that they opened this book, not for amusement, but to discover in it their doom of life and death." —*History of English Literature,* Vol. II, pp. 166, 168.

[18] "'With six and thirty abbotts, mitred priors, and bishops, and he in his whole pomp mitred,' the Cardinal [Wolsey] looked on while 'great baskets full of books . . . . were commanded after the great fire was made before the Rood of Northen,' the crucifix by the great door of the cathedral, 'thus to be burned, and those heretics to go thrice about the fire and to cast in their fagots.'" —J. R. Green, *History of the English People,* Vol. II, p. 128.

on with his revision and printing of the New Testament. Later, when the Great Bible was published, and copies were set up in the churches, six being in St. Paul's, Bishop Bonner complained because the people gathered about these to hear the Scriptures read, in preference to listening to his sermons. Even as late as the Council of Trent (1545–63) it was decreed that whoever should presume to read or to have a Bible without permission might not receive absolution until he should surrender the book.

Doubtless this general attitude of hostility on the part of both the ecclesiastical and the civil authorities was due to several causes—to intellectual and moral inertia, to the instinct of self-preservation inhering in institutions as well as in individuals, to the wholesome conservatism which desires to "hold fast that which is good," and also to that distrust of the people and that dread of liberalism which have so often stood in the way of human progress. It was the age of the Inquisition; it was the age, too, of the world's travail in the birth of the modern spirit, which was "set for the rise and fall of many." Instinctively the reigning powers in Church and State felt the tendency of events, and shrank from consequences which were fraught with even greater danger to themselves than they were aware. Yet their antagonism proved futile, truth and right prevailed, and the Word of the

Lord found free course to run and be glorified.[19]

The great influence of the Authorized Version among English-speaking people, fitly paralleling that of Luther's translation among the Germans, has been marked from the beginning. Its superiority to previous English renderings was quickly recognized, and its literary merits have never failed of appreciation. "It is the finest specimen

[19] The historic situation is vividly portrayed by Mr. James Anthony Froude, who says: "The Christian religion as taught and practised in Western Europe consisted of the Mass and the Confessional, of elaborate ceremonials, rituals, processions, pilgrimages, prayers to the Virgin and the saints, with dispensations and indulgences for laws broken or duties left undone. Of the Gospels and Epistles so much only was known to the laity as was read in the Church services, and that intoned as if to be purposely unintelligible to the understanding. Of the rest of the Bible nothing was known at all, because nothing was supposed to be necessary, and lectures like Colet's at Oxford were considered superfluous and dangerous. Copies of the Scriptures were rare, shut up in convent libraries, and studied only by professional theologians; while conventional interpretations were attached to the text which corrupted or distorted its meaning. Erasmus had undertaken to give the book to the whole world to read for itself—the original Greek of the Epistles and Gospels, with a new Latin translation—to wake up the intelligence, to show that the words had a real sense, and were not mere sounds like the dronings of a barrel-organ.

"It was finished at last, text and translation printed, and the living facts of Christianity, the persons of Christ and the Apostles, their history, their lives, their teaching were revealed to an astonished world. For the first time the laity were able to see, side by side, the Christianity which converted the world, and the Christianity of the Church with a Borgia pope, cardinal princes, ecclesiastical courts, and a mythology of lies. The effect was to be a spiritual earthquake.

"Erasmus had edited the Greek New Testament and made a fresh translation. Luther, in the Castle of Wartburg, was translating it into vernacular German, with the Old Testament to follow. Together, these two men had made accessible the rock, stronger than the rock of Peter, on which the faith of mankind was to be rebuilt."—*Life and Letters of Erasmus*, pp. 119, 120, 299.

of our prose literature at a time when English prose wore its stateliest and most majestic form," says Mr. Frederick G. Kenyon. Doubtless few good judges would dissent from this opinion. The English language reached a very high stage of development in the half-century immediately preceding the appearance of this version, for it was the age of Shakespeare and Bacon, of Latimer, Spenser, and Raleigh, and it is easy to see how admirably it uses the language, and how worthily the language fits the exalted and serious thoughts of the Scriptures.[20] "No master of style," says Mr. Kenyon further, "has been blind to its charms; and those who have recommended its study most strongly have often been those who, like Carlyle and Matthew Arnold, were not prepared to accept its teaching to the full." [21] Coleridge and Ruskin have acknowledged the surpassing beauty and power of this splendid production, even from a purely literary point of view; and we shall not be amiss if we regard it as our greatest English classic, and therefore claim for it a place in the education of all who would understand either the course of English history or the growth of English literature.

The Authorized Version is said to be "translated out of the original tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and re-

[20] See Taine's *History of English Literature*, Vol. II, pp. 169 f.

[21] *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, p. 233.

vised." What does this mean? That the Old Testament was rendered from the Hebrew, and the New Testament from the Greek. But what manuscript or manuscripts did the translators have before them; the very first made, those written by the biblical authors themselves? Manifestly not; for those originals had perished long before, and only copies of copies remained. These copies were all of quite late dates, they differed more or less from one another, some of them therefore were inaccurate to a considerable degree, and the best thing the translators could do was to compare the various copies closely and use their critical judgment in deciding which reading to follow in any given case. This they did, and the result was a remarkable achievement of conscientious labor; but they could not produce a perfect translation of the original words of the original biblical writings, simply because they had no perfect manuscript copy. Perhaps there can never be an absolutely perfect copy, but a great improvement in this matter has taken place since the Authorized Version was published.

It can be readily seen that the oldest copies of the Bible, or of any portions of it, must be the most reliable because nearest to the original. For a serious disadvantage of the hand-copying method of transmitting and diffusing any writings—and, as has been shown, such was the

only method during nearly fifteen centuries of Christian history—was the inevitable and increasing corruption of the text, resulting from sheer human fallibility. Hence, as a rule, the later manuscripts of the Bible are inferior to the earlier, especially before the dawn of modern critical scholarship, beginning with Erasmus. Now, some of the very oldest and most important biblical manuscripts have been found within the last two centuries, a few of them, indeed, within the last half-century. At present we have four very ancient MSS of the New Testament, two of which—Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus—date from the fourth century, and the other two—Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Ephraemi—from the fifth. Of these four priceless documents the first named is in the Vatican Library at Rome, the second in the Imperial Library at St. Petersburg, the third in the British Museum at London, and the other in the National Library at Paris. Each of these has an interesting history, and not a little of thrilling romance is connected with at least one of them —Codex Sinaiticus.

This manuscript was discovered by Dr. Constantine Tischendorf in the monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai upon his third visit there in 1859. At his first visit, in 1844, he had accidentally found some pages of the Old Testament which were about to be cast into the fire,

and had quite easily obtained permission to keep them. His second visit, in 1853, was fruitless; but returning, six years later, under the patronage of the Czar, he was received with more favor by the monks, and was rewarded at last by discovering and obtaining a complete copy of the New Testament, on vellum made from the finest skins of antelopes, and in a large, clear handwriting. He brought it home with joy and published it for the benefit of all biblical scholars, and it has since reposed securely in the archives of Russia's Imperial Library. Dr. Tischendorf assigned it to the middle of the fourth century.

One of the other manuscripts mentioned—Codex Vaticanus—is generally considered older, and therefore the very oldest known to exist; but it likewise dates from the fourth century. It has been in its present home, the Vatican Library, since about 1450. After being jealously guarded, and shown with great reluctance even to the foremost scholars, it was published in a complete photographic facsimile in 1889–90, by permission of Pope Leo XIII, in connection with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his elevation to the priesthood.

Because of all the discoveries subsequent to the date of the Authorized Version, and because of the patient labors of many scholars to improve the text of both Testaments, it was felt, a generation or more ago, that the time had

come for another revision of the Bible. As early as 1856 the subject was broached, but not until 1870 was definite action taken. In that year a committee of English churchmen, soliciting the co-operation of scholars from other religious bodies and from America, undertook the work of producing a Revised Version. Two companies were formed. The one for the New Testament occupied ten and a half years, sitting about forty days a year; that for the Old Testament fourteen years, sitting about fifty-six days a year. In 1871 two corresponding companies of American scholars joined in the task. The Revised New Testament was published May 17, 1881; the entire Bible, May 19, 1885.[22]

The principal merit of this revision is its greater accuracy. Not only is it rendered from an improved text, but it is more correctly translated than any former version. It has contributed much to a truer general understanding of the Bible, not merely in its literary aspects, but even more in its teachings. For example, it presents the subject-matter in proper paragraphs, instead of in single verses, and thereby conveys to the reader some sense of wholeness in his conception of any given passage or book; it prints such works as Job, the Psalms, and Proverbs in a form to indicate their character as poetry; it

[22] For more detailed and complete information, see the prefaces to both Testaments, particularly the New, in the Revised Version; also the *Cambridge Companion*, p. 87.

likewise indicates the quotations in the New Testament from the Old; its marginal readings throw light on the text; and its more truthful rendering of the originals formerly translated "hell," "devil," "everlasting," "damnation," etc., dispels not a few gross errors. The educative value of these changes marks them as a noteworthy improvement, alone justifying the work as a whole. We may expect it to win its way among those who care more for correctness than for euphony in reading the Scriptures—who believe, indeed, that the meaning of Holy Writ is too important to be concealed or misinterpreted for the sake of a smooth and pleasant rendering. The message which the Bible has for us is the message which its authors really delivered; and it is the effort to get at that actual, original message which is at once the inspiration and the glory of modern biblical scholarship.

When the Revised Version was published in 1881–85, there were numerous instances in which different translations from those that were adopted were preferred by the American Revision Committee. Inasmuch as the English scholars had taken the initiative, it was agreed that they should have the decisive vote in all cases involving diverse opinions; but, on the other hand, it was also agreed that the American preferences should be published in an Appendix to the Revised Version for a term of fourteen years,

and that during this period the revised Bible as thus issued by the University Presses of Oxford and Cambridge should receive the cordial support of the whole body of Revisers. The American committee thereupon decided to continue its organization, with a view to the ultimate preparation of still another revision which should embody the preferences of the American scholars, together with certain other desired improvements. This purpose has been at length fully carried out in the publication, in 1901, by Messrs. Thomas Nelson & Sons, of the *American Standard Edition of the Revised Version.*

There are many respects in which this American Standard Edition is superior, not only to the English Revision, but to all previous versions in our language.[23] Not merely has it incorporated the readings published in the Appendix, as above stated, but that Appendix itself has been carefully revised. It has adopted the term "Jehovah" for "Lord" and in many instances "God," thereby distinctly conveying the important historic fact that Jehovah was peculiarly Israel's God. It has changed the paragraphing of the English Revision slightly and for the better, and has furnished subject-headings at the top of the page which are not only convenient guides in reading, but are also more correct than those of the Au-

[23] For full particulars and much valuable information the reader should consult the prefaces to both Testaments of the American Revision.

thorized Version; and in the form of footnotes it gives alternate renderings of words, phrases, or sentences, or anglicized equivalents of the originals, which afford instruction as to various plausible or possible shades of meaning. Inaccurate translations are corrected, as in I Tim. vi. 10, or Acts xvii. 22; obsolete words are discontinued, and modern expressions employed; the term "Holy Spirit" is substituted for "Holy Ghost;" and copious marginal references are supplied in the larger editions. These and other features make the American Standard Revision undoubtedly the most nearly perfect version of the Scriptures ever produced in the English tongue.

Still other translations of the Bible, in whole or in part, have appeared of late, but they can be barely mentioned here. *The Polychrome Bible,* for the studious classes, is the most important of these; while *The Twentieth Century New Testament,* rendered into the language of today, makes its pages wonderfully vivid and interesting to the ordinary reader. Besides, there are instructive paraphrases of portions of the Scriptures entitled *Messages of the Bible,* prepared by Professors Kent and Sanders; and there is Professor Richard G. Moulton's *Modern Reader's Bible,* which, using the Revised Version of 1881–85, casts the material in a most attractive literary and typographical form, issued in small vol-

umes, with introductory and explanatory notes. Nor should omission be made of *The Temple Bible,* in style corresponding to the "Temple Edition" of Shakespeare, issued by the same publishers, Messrs. J. M. Dent and Company, and using the text of the King James Version. Another admirable edition is *The New-Century Bible,* edited by Professor W. F. Adeny, and published likewise in small volumes. This work employs both the King James translation and the English Revision, and is furnished with copious footnotes and instructive introductions embodying modern information respecting the various biblical books. Together these many editions have brought to a high state of perfection and usefulness the great work of translating the Holy Scriptures into the English language. Thus the present age is linked with the ages of the past by the golden chain of the history of the Bible.

CHAPTER II

THE TRADITIONAL VIEW OF THE BIBLE

The previous chapter presented some of the main facts in the story of the way in which we came by our English Bible. We have now to look at the estimation in which it has been held since about the time of the making of the Authorized Version, 1611 A. D. It will be necessary to state the popular view, to point out its sources, to show its practical bearings, and to pass judgment upon it, before we can appreciate the better conception that will be developed out of our studies as we proceed.

The customary phrase in which the majority of Christians speak of the Bible is, "the Word of God." While there are, perhaps, few persons so densely ignorant as to suppose that the Almighty literally wrote the Sacred Volume and let it down out of heaven into this world, there are thousands whose ideas of its origin are not far removed from such a crude notion. For they consider that, even if God did not actually dictate the entire contents of the Bible to its writers, who simply acted as amanuenses to record what they were bidden, he at least so fully and infallibly inspired and controlled the writers that they were mere tools, instruments, writing-machines, in his hand. Accordingly every book,

chapter, paragraph, verse, sentence, clause, phrase, and word are the direct gift of God to the children of men, and the whole Bible is the veritable Word of God, all portions of it are of equal value and authority, and whoever denies any single part of it virtually denies it entirely, while whoever accepts any part of it is under obligation to accept it all. This is that doctrine of the so-called "plenary" (i. e., full) inspiration and absolute infallibility of the Scriptures which regards them not merely as *containing,* but as *being,* a message from God to man, which is wholly free from error, whether of historical, scientific, or moral character.

Such, in brief, is the general conception of the Bible that has prevailed among most Protestants during the last three hundred years, scarcely yielding to even the slightest modifications until within the last half-century. It has dominated the theology of nearly all the so-called evangelical churches; it has characterized the revival efforts which they have so often put forth; it has been instilled into the minds of the children who have grown up in them; and "for substance of doctrine" it still lingers in the belief of the great majority of their communicants, especially the less educated among them. The late Dwight L. Moody was wont to declare his acceptance of the Bible as "the Word of God from back to back;" and in 1895 he urged Sunday-

school teachers to "believe the Bible, the whole Bible, with every fiber of the body." No doubt such a muscular faith was useful in moving the multitudes that Mr. Moody was accustomed to gather, and he was unquestionably sincere in his convictions; yet it is not difficult to see that it was his Christian devotion and rich spiritual experience rather than his idea of the Bible that really made him the noble evangelist he was. He might have been equally devoted and successful with a very different conception of the Bible, so far as its formal origin was concerned. If, however, Mr. Moody and his faith and his multitudes may be considered fairly representative of modern orthodox Protestantism, I am justified in saying that the view I have stated, although being now abandoned or qualified by progressive preachers and many enlightened laymen in the great communions included in that designation, is still the prevalent and dominant view in the rank and file of their constituency. In support of this judgment I may cite the disposition of the case of Professor Charles A. Briggs, resulting in his suspension from the Presbyterian ministry because he taught, among other things no worse, the probable "errancy" of the "original autographs" of Holy Scripture, supposing they could ever be recovered; and also the opposition which manifested itself, briefly but sharply, to his ordination in the Protestant Episcopal Church.

Not pausing here to describe the grotesque features of this conception or the absurd lengths to which it has sometimes been carried, and only remarking that it is substantially inwrought, like a pattern, into the warp and woof of nearly all our popular religious thought and work—by which I mean the hymns, the liturgies, the Sunday-school instruction, and the every-day religious conversation of the masses of Protestant Christians—let me pass to inquire how it arose and gained such supremacy.

There have been three principal sources of this traditional view.

1. Historically it antedates Christianity. As regards the Old Testament, the mechanical theory of inspiration and revelation prevailed among the Jews during the last two or three centuries before Christ; and it was naturally carried over into the Christian era, and attached itself to the New Testament writings in the gradual process of their canonization.[1] In fact, similar ideas respecting the divine source of written and spoken oracles were familiar to the gentile mind. Yet it was not until after the great rupture known as the Protestant Reformation that the general notion here considered assumed its rigid modern form; and then it resulted partly from the exigencies of the period and partly from the lack of

[1] See Professor E. C. Moore, *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, p. 6; also G. P. Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine*, p. 75; also Hernack, *History of Dogma*, Vol. II, pp. 57 f.

learning among the people. Previous to that time all Christians in western Europe had been taught to regard the Catholic church, with its head at Rome, as the infallible authority and final court of appeal in matters of faith and morals; and when the Protestants broke with that authority and court, it soon became necessary to have another, in order to determine debatable questions. This they at length came to find in the Bible. To the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, they would appeal, and not to any ecclesiastical organization or power, as the supreme tribunal to settle all disputed points of religious teaching; and hence the right of every man to read and interpret the Bible for himself, without dictation from church or clergy, became the great boon which the Reformation conferred upon the liberated portion of the Christian community then and thenceforward. This right, the right of private judgment in matters of faith and morals, is the very gist of Protestantism, lies at the basis of modern civil liberty, and is the one radical, vital, and permanent opponent of Roman Catholicism.

But, at the time of which I am speaking, the masses of the people, and to a great extent the ministers of religion, and even many of the university teachers, were poorly prepared, because of deficient scholarship, to understand the Bible correctly and to use it properly. To be sure,

learning was reviving and making rapid progress; but the process had not gone far enough to reach more than comparatively a few of the leaders of thought. The Scriptures had not been in general circulation, chiefly perhaps because the art of printing had not been fully developed yet, and the Latin Vulgate was the only translation that may be said to have been widely known. Even this could not be compared with the original until Erasmus published (1516) his Greek Testament, and Cardinal Ximenes, a Spanish scholar, issued (1514–17) his Hebrew, Greek, and Latin versions in the four volumes known as the "Complutensian Polyglot;" for the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages had not revived sufficiently to enable any except a very few to read the Bible in the original, and among even the best educated only a little was known about the text and the various ancient manuscripts. Besides, there was hardly any physical science worthy of the name; philosophy was fanciful, airy, eccentric, and arbitrary; and the general history of antiquity, of Greece, Egypt, Persia, and Assyria, was practically a sealed book because the people were but slightly acquainted with any ancient language except the Latin. Under all these circumstances it is not strange that such a belief respecting the Scriptures as has been alluded to above should have been revived, impressed upon the popular mind, and

transmitted down to us. Yet it must not be forgotten that it took on its extreme shape and inflexibility in the post-Reformation period; for Luther, Calvin, and the English Reformers were more liberal concerning this subject than their successors of a generation or two later; and it was not until about the beginning of the seventeenth century that bibliolatry, the undue, unnatural, false exaltation of the Bible, crystallized into the dogma of its plenary inspiration and absolute infallibility that has held such wide and powerful sway ever since.

2. Another source of the view referred to is the idea that the Bible is a divine revelation. In a general way this idea antedates the history which I have just sketched, and therefore helped to shape it; and, on the other hand, it has been promoted and inculcated by that history. It is an easy thing to say that the Bible is a divine revelation, just as it is an easy thing to say that the pope of Rome is the vicar of Christ; and because the multitudes of people do not think deeply or discriminatingly, especially concerning those interests that are called supernatural, it is easy, when such an idea or claim is put forth and accompanied by real and great merits, to get it popularly accepted. One may almost say that there exists among the masses of mankind an insatiable appetite for striking evidences of supernatural power; so that whoever comes for-

ward making stupendous pretensions, with any sort of show to support them, will find a host of followers; indeed, it sometimes seems as if he who can make the biggest claim, and can furnish forth the most imposing array of spectacular adjuncts, is sure of the largest crowds of adherents. In proof of this, witness the actual deification of the Roman emperor two thousand years ago; the all but universal belief of the alliance of exceptional men with heaven; the idealizing and idolizing of national heroes; the throngs that gather about every truly great leader; the eager looking for signs and wonders, for miracles and marvels, on the part of all such; the readiness to swallow everything they say; and the remarkable éclat with which gorgeous displays of power and glory, whether civil, military, or religious, are everywhere received. This is an evidence, not that they love fictitious values, although a cynic might say they do, but rather that they are blindly seeking real values; and thus it is a pathetic testimony to the natural trustfulness of the human heart, and to the need of the light of knowledge for its guidance.

Now, when people have come, through whatsoever influences, to believe thoroughly in any set of writings as a divine revelation, they immediately begin to idolize them and think to exalt them by regarding them as free from error. In this way those who have called the

Bible a divine revelation have gone so far as to say that there are no mistakes or blemishes in it of any sort, whether relating to fact, to quality of teaching, or to style of composition, or even to transmission; indeed, they do not see how there can be any such if it is really the "Word of God"—it must be absolutely faultless and infallible. Hence they cannot allow any correction of its subject-matter, or even any alteration of its grammatical form. "It is impious and profane audacity," said Calovius, "to change a single point in the Word of God, and to substitute a smooth breathing for a rough one, or a rough for a smooth." Indeed, when it was found out, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, that the Hebrew Scriptures were originally written in consonants alone, and the vowels were added by the Masoretes in the seventh or eighth century, a great outcry was made against this heretical fact as subversive of the very foundations of Christianity, and it took a hundred years to get it fairly recognized. People positively believed that those vowel points were given by divine inspiration; and thus the idea of a revelation from God, which they attached to the Bible, carried them to unreasonable extremes of prejudice. So long as men continue to hold this bald idea, in this form of statement, without modification, they will retain the notion of the Bible's uniformity and infallibility. When they shall

learn to be content to say simply that the Scriptures "*contain* God's true Word," or "*contain* a revelation of the character of God," etc., as certain Christian bodies have already done, they will have held fast to all that is essential, and will have made an immense advance toward intellectual and spiritual liberty, and toward a larger and deeper religious faith.

3. A third source of the view I have described lies in the natural veneration and affections of mankind. There is really so much that is great and good in the Bible, and does help so powerfully and blessedly the hungry soul that resorts to it for the bread of life, that it soon becomes very dear and sacred to the hearts of all such. They take it for "the man of their counsel;" over it they pour out their prayers of thanksgiving and supplication, of contrition and bereavement, of peace and joy; upon its pages fall their tears like rain, as they bend above it in the trying hours of life; into the hands of dear friends they place it, as they go away out into a cold and sinful world; and from its treasure-house of wisdom, consolation, and sweet beauty, they cull sentences or phrases to send like flowers to absent ones who gather before the marriage altar, or around the funeral bier, or at the domestic fireside; nor does it fail to enrich and sanctify them in all these holy uses. It furnishes the language for the most impressive ceremonies

of public and private occasions throughout Christendom; its words are the carrier-pigeons that bear our petitions and our anthems of praise heavenward in our services of stated worship; its truths give us our texts for our sermons, and its pregnant utterances drive home into the depths of our souls the lessons of righteousness which we so much need to learn. No other book in all the world is so full of power, sublimity, and spirituality; no other ever came out of such depths of moral and religious experience; and no other can reach, in such varied and effective ways, the manifold needs of the human heart. Therefore those who know somewhat of its surpassing merits, who have learned by experience to understand and appreciate its ability to help them, cannot but hold it dear and sacred. It becomes enshrined in their affections, and while they thank God for so precious a gift, they beseech him to guard and bless its holy mission among all the children of men.

Now this veneration of the Bible, which in itself is appropriate, beautiful, and profitable, and which no man should wantonly weaken, serves to confirm, establish, and perpetuate a false intellectual view of it, if such a view be prevalent and if there be but little enlightenment. If a person who has not been educated to think broadly and discriminatingly—and it is a bane of sectarianism that it often educates people in just the

opposite way—conceives of the Bible as a divine revelation, which is all of one piece, fully inspired and wholly infallible, and then comes to attach himself to it through his moral and spiritual affections, in some such manner as I have indicated, he is almost sure either to cling to the dogma in all its rigidity, and so dwarf his intellect, or to shock his faith and disturb his peace in attempting to gain a more rational conception of the nature, structure, and true worth of the Scriptures. More likely it will be the former of these processes that he will go through. For he cannot bear to hear anything said against the Bible, and he construes everything that does not support his view as being thus said, and he will not listen to it. So he intrenches and fortifies himself in his ignorance, shuts the light of additional truth out of his mind and vainly imagines he is loyally defending the holy things of God, while others are proving themselves apostates, who are seeing higher, larger, clearer, grander things in the good old Book that is as dear to them as to him. To such a one we must say, as best we can, that the spiritual quality of a writing, no matter what that writing may be, in nowise determines the date and authorship of other miscellaneous writings which are bound up with it, and may not go far in determining even its own date and authorship. The fact that so many of the Psalms help you by voicing the deeper thoughts

and feelings of the soul, in exalted and beautiful language, does not decide whether David or somebody else wrote them; that is a question which other lines of evidence must settle. A true poem is a poem, even though it be utterly fugitive, so that no man can tell when it was written or by whom. So it is with the books of the Bible; they are good and helpful, and we are all justified in venerating and loving them; but our affection for them cannot pronounce as to their historic veracity, and certainly cannot prove them to be of miraculous origin.

Such are some of the main sources of the traditional view of the Bible—the peculiar conditions of the post-Reformation period, the influence of the idea of a divine revelation, and the strength of the natural sentiments of veneration and affection.

Now what shall be said of this view? A candid student must admit that it has served some good purposes. It has undoubtedly secured a degree of attention to the Bible which no other view could have obtained for it in the age and stage of culture in which it has prevailed. A more advanced conception could not be appreciated until a larger knowledge of many things —especially of history, ethnology, comparative language and religion, as well as the development of theology and ecclesiastical institutions— had prepared the way for it. If, therefore, this

view had not existed, the Bible would probably have been neglected, and the mighty moral and religious energy which it has imparted to our western civilization would have been sadly wanting. It is much to say for any idea or social custom that it has served its own time even fairly well; it is from this standpoint alone that we can judge justly of men and measures, of doctrines and institutions; and, thus regarded, we must concede that the traditional view of the Bible has been natural, or at least inevitable, and has contributed not a little to produce the very conditions under which it is now being outgrown.

Nevertheless, considered with reference to the present age, it has been, or is now, an unfortunate view; it has been narrow, and therefore cramping to the human mind; it has been rigid, and therefore has allowed little room for progress on the part of those holding it—so much so, indeed, that nearly all progress under it has had to bear the stigma of heresy; it has begotten bibliolatry, and therefore has made the Bible a fetich; it has fixed the attention of men upon the letter of Scripture, and therefore has shut out the influence of the spirit; and by putting the human soul in bondage to a thing, it has kept it from the free service of the one living and true God.

It may be well to supplement this general criticism with some specifications as to the bad

effects which the view here rejected has produced.

1. It has been an obstacle to the advance of learning. Not to go back farther than the memory of living men reaches, it is known to all intelligent people that the teachings of modern geology have been opposed, and their promulgation resisted, because of their conflict with the account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis—and how ludicrous have been the attempts to harmonize them with that account!—that for the same reason the theory of evolution, now accepted in some form by nearly all scientists, has been scouted, and its adherents put under ban, even to the extent of having their professional positions disturbed, if not forcibly taken from them; and that the science of historical and literary criticism, of which biblical criticism is a branch, has been reproached and ridiculed, and some of its disciples likewise driven from their honored places, because the results reached by such study have not harmonized with the traditional conception of Scripture. All these things have occurred under our own eyes, and some of them are still occurring in these opening years of the twentieth century. Yet it is nothing new under the sun; for, fifteen hundred years ago, St. Jerome had to meet much the same sort of opposition; so did Columbus, Galileo, and Copernicus, and a host of other seekers after

truth. It is simply a phase of human ignorance and bigotry, but it is a sorry spectacle.[2]

2. It has sanctioned, supported, and perpetuated erroneous ideas and evil practices. Take, for instance, the doctrine of the second coming of Christ and the end of the world; how strangely persistent this has been, and what fantastic forms it has assumed! yet it would have died out long ago but for this wrong view of the Bible. The same is true of the doctrine of endless punishment. Or take slavery, capital punishment, and the subjection of woman—all relics of paganism; how long have these hoary evils been buttressed by quotations from Scripture, that never would have been used thus except for such an extreme notion about its divine authority as I have combated! In recent years the great Methodist Episcopal Church has been struggling over the question of the ordination of women to the ministry, which is strongly opposed because Paul said to Timothy: "I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." [3] Even the liquor-dealers have not scrupled to quote the words of the same noble apostle, since they happened to find out that he said to the same young man:

[2] The reader who cares to look farther into this subject may consult with much profit Dr. Andrew D. White's *Warfare of Science with Christian Theology*, 2 vols.

[3] I Tim. ii. 12.

"Drink no longer water, but take a little wine for thy stomach's sake." [4]

3. This traditional view involves such bondage to the letter as to prevent spiritual growth. Paul said that "the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." When a religion begins to die, it begins to get hard and dry, like a tree that is going through the same process. Or, like an old Egyptian king, who, knowing his end was near, began to build a mausoleum to receive his remains; a religion that is already moribund begins straightway to make its casket and hew out its tomb, begins to encase itself in some outward shell of rite, or dogma, or institution, or sacred book. For proof, read the history of religion in India, in Judea, in imperial Rome, in mediæval Europe.

4. Still another fault chargeable to this view is that it disregards all progress of ideas in the Bible, and obliterates all distinctions between good and bad in the quality of its various writings. By teaching that it is all of one piece, and all the Word of God, it leaves no room for thinking that the ideas set forth in Genesis may not be so exalted or true as those contained in Isaiah or the Sermon on the Mount; and it likewise forbids us to suppose that the moral precepts of the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes may not in some instances be just as noble and pure as the

[4] *Ibid.*, v. 23.

ethics of Jesus or Paul or John. But, as a matter of fact, there are wide differences in these respects, both intellectually and morally; there is a progress in thought from the days of the old Hebrew patriarchs to those of the later prophets, and there is an advance in moral standards from the time of Solomon to that of Christ. Now what can be more important than to teach ourselves and our children to see these distinctions, between high and low, between good and bad, between true and false, between right and wrong, wherever they really exist, in human life, in literature, in art, in philosophy? Is not this the main object of all our teaching, to see and choose and love the true, the beautiful, and the good, as distinguished from their opposites? But the traditional conception of the Bible tends to blunt our sensibilities in this respect; and we jumble together the notions and maxims of old shepherd-kings and warriors with the sweet spiritual visions and principles of the blessed Christ, and call them all, indiscriminately, the Word of God! Then we teach them to our children, as all of equal value and authority; and can we wonder that the children are confused, unenlightened, unawakened, untouched?

5. Such a view of the Bible opens the way for all the vagaries and falsehoods of an irresponsible exegesis. It makes the Book an arsenal of proof-texts, by the dexterous employment of

which almost any conceivable doctrine can be supported. By picking out a verse or sentence from one part of the Bible, and other verses or sentences from other parts, and then skilfully piecing them together, without any reference to their contexts or their historical origin and the real meaning of their authors, one can prove the most baseless and pernicious of theories. Then when the imagination is given free reins, and the allegorizing method of interpretation is carried to extremes, as was the case in the later centuries of Judaism and the early centuries of Christianity, and even among the Greeks,[5] utterly fantastic results ensue. For example, "when we are told that Rebecca comes to draw water at the well and so meets the servant of Abraham, the meaning is, according to Origen, that we must daily come to the wells of Scripture in order to meet with Christ." [6] Another, "commenting on Genesis 15:9, explains 'the calf, the goat, and the ram of three years' in Abraham's sacrifices to mean his soul, his sentient faculty, and his mind." [7] Innumerable instances of a similar character might be cited to show how this general idea of Scripture and these arbitrary methods of interpretation, misleading even so great a teacher as the illustrious Origen, have

[5] Consult with great profit Farrar's *History of Interpretation* (Appleton, 1886), Lectures ii, iii, and iv.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 201.

begotten among lesser minds a narrow dogmatism that has engendered harsh, bitter, disastrous controversies.

6. Finally, such a view breaks down at length from its own weight. When you claim that the Bible is a divine revelation throughout, fully inspired and infallible, you make a stupendous claim. In logic it is extremely difficult to prove a universal negative; but this is exactly what is undertaken when one contends that the Bible is absolutely without error. Presently the discovery is made that errors are actually to be found within its pages—mistakes, discrepancies, imperfections which simply cannot be reconciled with this theory: what happens? A distinct shock to faith and morals is immediately felt, from which, alas! many do not recover. The Bible seems no longer of any worth, on the very basis upon which it has stood; for it has been said to be all of one piece, and if false in one particular, is false in all others. This is precisely what has frequently occurred in recent years; men have thrown the Bible and the church and religion to the winds, sometimes along with moral restraints, because they had been taught that the Bible was an infallible revelation of divine truth, not only in its spirit but also in its letter, and they have learned in the common school that its ideas on some matters—for instance, the history of creation—are erroneous.

Here is the danger for thousands of people, that they will let go everything connected with Christianity—its holy sanctions, its sublime ideals, its wonderful inspirations and consolations—when this fabric of unreasonable notions about the Sacred Book collapses, as it is doing and will continue to do.[8]

From the foregoing reflections it would seem evident that there must be a better view of the Bible, more rational, natural, simple, heart-satisfying. I am absolutely sure that there is such a better view, which saves all the excellences of Scripture and frees us from all its defects; and it will be a delight to try to set it forth in succeeding chapters.

[8] It was exactly such a conception of the Bible, involving such an issue, that gave the late Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll his occupation as an opponent of the Christian religion.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS BIBLICAL CRITICISM?

At least a primary knowledge of the nature and service of biblical criticism is indispensable to a proper understanding of the better conception of Scripture of which we are in pursuit. Therefore, before we can go forward into the larger thought, the deeper faith, and the more vital spirituality which wait to reward our study, we must try to learn some simple lessons in this important matter. A brief, untechnical explanation of the need, the history, the methods, and the purpose of this fruitful branch of modern learning may best enable the general reader to form a clear idea of the work of the scholars and of its true significance.

If one were about to visit London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome, he would probably procure a guide-book of foreign travel, or perhaps join some "personally-conducted" excursion party; and he might like also to know in advance whatever he could learn from history, language, literature, and art respecting those places and their people. Why? Because the information thus obtained would so introduce those cities to the traveler as to prepare him to derive the most enjoyment and profit from his tour. It is much the same with the Bible; it needs to be introduced to

one's study by preliminary explanations of its origin and character. The student must wander somewhat aimlessly through its pages, bewildered by its strange and multiform contents, without previous instruction concerning the land and the people that gave it birth, concerning its structure and history, and concerning the representative opinions which have been held regarding its place and value. In other words, there is need of what is technically called "An Introduction to the Study of the Scriptures," seeking to impart the requisite information to qualify one to approach the Bible with a correct preconception as to its nature and worth.

Now, partly out of the attempt to meet this need, partly out of the effort to satisfy the craving for accurate and complete knowledge, for its own sake, and partly out of the wish to defend cherished, sacred beliefs, there has grown up the science of biblical criticism. Actuated by curiosity, the love of truth, or a deep piety, men have wanted to learn all they could about the Bible—its origin, language, transmission, diffusion, interpretation, and intrinsic merits.[1] There-

[1] "Two kinds of piety join their forces to press upon us the duty of knowing the Bible intimately. The first is the historical spirit, a true kind of piety, in that it bids us know the words and deeds of the men of the past, because of their intrinsic worth and meaning. The second is the piety of the Christian, which bids us search the Scriptures because they have a deeper root in human experience than any other book, and because they speak home to our hearts as no other book can. The scientific motive demands the original facts and thoughts of

fore they have bent themselves to make every inquiry that might throw the least bit of light upon the various problems with which they have dealt, some of them of the minutest character; and by all these labors, prolonged and patient, there has been built up a large department of learning which may be properly called a science because it has its specialized workers, its vast accumulation of facts, its definite and reliable methods of procedure, and its verified results that are of great value. As such a department, it is merely a particular field of research lying within the domain of historical and literary criticism in general, to which we are indebted for practically all our trustworthy knowledge of the past. Thus it appears that biblical criticism is simply one of the sisterhood of modern sciences; and surely, when we understand her true mission, we shall feel that her presence is benign and shall rejoice to do her grateful and loving homage.

The word *criticism* denotes, primarily, a judgment, or an act of judging; its derivation from a Greek verb (*κρίνω*) meaning *to discern,* or *to try,* or *to pass judgment upon,* or *to determine,* gives it this signification. As applied to literary matters, it conveys the idea, not of fault-finding, but of fairly and justly estimating

Scripture, distinct and separate from subsequent opinion regarding Scripture. The religious motive demands the Word of God in its pristine beauty. The two motives are at one."—Professor H. S. Nash, *The History of the Higher Criticism,* p. 5.

both merits and defects. In other words, it is simply an impartial judgment, or as nearly such as the given critic can render, on whatever question is under consideration.

Plainly, then, biblical criticism is merely the science and art of understanding the Scriptures. One must understand them in order to appreciate them, that is, to judge them in strict truth. But no one fully understands the Scriptures who does not know all he can about them; and in this sense, of course, nobody can be said to have an absolutely perfect comprehension of them. The little school-boy who can barely pronounce the words on the printed page does not really read his book; he will read it only when he learns to grasp the thought contained in the language. But who best lays hold of the thought of a writer? Clearly, he who knows most about the circumstances and influences that contributed to the production of the work in question, together with the truest sympathy with the author's spirit or peculiar characteristics. The same principle holds in music, in art, in oratory, in literature generally; and he who gives the most perfect interpretation of a great work, in any of these departments of human life, is hailed as a genius and becomes a real helper of his fellow-men. It is quite so in biblical matters; he is the best interpreter of the Sacred Writings who enters most fully into the thought and spirit of their

respective authors; and he alone can do this who possesses, among other qualifications, a large amount of accurate knowledge concerning the times in which they wrote and the interests they sought to subserve. Thus biblical criticism becomes simply a preparation for appreciating the Scriptures.[2]

Such preparation requires two things: (1) a knowledge of the historical conditions under which the authors of the Bible wrote, so far as these can be reproduced to thought; and (2) a knowledge of exactly what they wrote, as nearly as this can be ascertained. Hence biblical criticism naturally divides itself into two branches, called the Lower or Textual, and the Higher or Literary.[3]

I. The Lower Criticism has to do with the text of Scripture. A brief account has been given in the first chapter of the way in which the

[2] "We define criticism, therefore, as that mental process in modern Christianity whereby the historic character, the true nature, of divine revelation is appreciated and manifested. This historic spirit, the desire to know the whole past even as it was in itself, comes in as a noble servant raised up by God to help the Church to truly know her Bible, and thus pay her debt to the Author of Sacred Scripture. . . . . The well-being of the Church depends upon the right interpretation of the Bible. We must seek to know it from within and along the lines of its own meaning and purpose. That is our most sacred obligation."—Nash, *History of the Higher Criticism*, pp. 14, 15.

[3] "Criticism, in its earliest stage, took the form of text criticism. When, at a more advanced stage, it entered upon the inner study of Scripture, it called itself 'higher' in order to distinguish itself from the criticism of the text as a 'lower,' or preparatory form of study. The adjective is the result of a bare historical incident."—Nash, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13.

writings of the Bible came down to us. Previous to the fifteenth century the only mode of transmission was that of hand-made copies. But it is evident that such copies could not be produced, by different persons, at different times, and in different countries, without a multitude of errors creeping into them. It is now known that, as a matter of fact, many thousands of such errors did actually occur, first and last; that is to say, the different manuscripts, large and small, at present known to exist, show a vast number of various readings, running all the way from a single letter, or even an accent or a breathing, to a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph. Of the New Testament alone, 3,829 manuscripts —some of them, to be sure, only little fragments —had been catalogued by the year 1901.[4] It is not surprising, therefore, to learn that the "variants" in all these amount to a total of 150,000 or more. Of course the great majority of such differences are extremely slight, and do not materially affect any important fact or truth; but others are of more serious consequence. It is neither possible nor desirable to discuss these here, but it is well for the reader to see how such variations have arisen.

Even the mechanical process of printing does not always insure the publication and transmis-

[4] See E. Nestle, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (1901), p. 34, translated by William Edie.

sion of an author's exact words, as witness the various readings of many passages in Shakespeare's writings. Much more liable to variation must be hand-made copies of a literary work, especially when frequently produced in the course of several centuries. The original "autographs" of the biblical books, that is, those bearing the signatures of their authors, undoubtedly perished completely long ago. They were written upon papyrus, which was both fragile and bulky, and which was subject, not only to the wear of much handling, but also to the disintegrating influences of most climates.[5] True, the dry climate and soil of Egypt have preserved to the present day many papyri far older than the Christian era, and there always remains the bare possibility that a rich biblical "find" may yet be exhumed in that region; but all hopes in this direction must be of the feeblest character. The use of papyrus for the Scriptures was gradually discontinued, being superseded by parchment at about the close of the third century.[6] Now,

[5] For an instructive and quite detailed account of these matters, see Frederic G. Kenyon's *Handbook to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (Macmillan, 1901), chap. ii; also Nestle, *op. cit.*, chap. ii; also Jülicher, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 576–88; translation, Putnams, 1904.

The entire New Testament on papyrus, even if written in a small hand and with narrow margins, would have made a roll about 200 feet in length; "the Gospel of St. Mark would occupy about 19 feet, that of St. John 23 feet, 6 inches, St. Matthew 30 feet, the Acts and St. Luke's Gospel about 31 or 32 feet."—Kenyon, *op. cit.*

[6] "Jerome tells us that between 340 and 380 the bishops of

parchment was an expensive material. This fact necessitated the utilization of every sheet and led naturally to the crowding of each page. In some instances different works were joined in the same manuscript, in order to avoid wasting valuable space; and in others, more rarely, an early writing, deemed of less worth, was erased and a subsequent production inscribed in its place. Occasionally it has been possible, by the use of chemicals, to restore the former composition. Thus the costliness of parchment and the manner of its use opened the way for errors to creep into the successive copies of the biblical manuscripts, while the greater frequency with which the papyrus rolls had to be reproduced increased the liability to variations in their case. Besides, as regards the New Testament writings particularly, they were not at first considered sacred and precious, and nobody had any idea of their preservation and circulation for hundreds of years; therefore, no such pains were taken in transcribing them as attached to the copying of the Old Testament books, or even the Greek classics.

Again, the ancient mode of writing was to run the letters and words close together, without

Cæsarea saved the library formed in that place by Origen and Pamphilus from decay by laboriously transcribing everything it contained on to parchment. Thus the greater part of this library must originally have consisted of papyrus rolls, and we may probably consider the period about 300 as that of the general transition to the use of parchment."—Jülicher, *op. cit.*, p. 576

separation or punctuation. Let one imagine himself confronted with even a printed page having no spaces between the words and no punctuation marks, and set to copy it or to translate it; would he be likely to do it without a single mistake? Furthermore, in the case of the Old Testament, the Hebrew was originally written without vowels. Let one imagine himself, again, confronted with a printed page of English having all the vowels removed and the consonants crowded close together; would it be easy to supply those vowels by simply depending upon one's own judgment as to what they ought to be, and then to transcribe or to translate the writing without error? Yet such is a true hint of the way in which our Old Testament Scriptures have reached us. In view of these facts and the possibilities of deviation which they suggest, the marvel is that the books of the Bible have been preserved and transmitted with so little corruption as has actually taken place.

The different kinds or classes of errors occurring in the process of making numerous copies of the Scriptures, under the general conditions thus described, may be barely mentioned here, but can hardly be illustrated by specific examples.[7] Some arose from a mere slip of the

[7] For a minute exhibit of some of these, the reader may consult the works already cited; for instance, Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, chap. i; also his *Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, pp. 7 f.; also particularly Jülicher, Pt. III, chap. ii, § 51.

pen, by which one letter or syllable was substituted for another; some, by the accidental omission of a word or a line. Occasionally marginal notes were later copied into the text; and parallel passages in the gospels were sometimes deliberately altered in order to bring them into harmony with one another. Still other errors no doubt owe their existence to the mutilation of manuscripts, or the dimming of words through the soiling or wearing of the material on which they were written, and the necessity thence arising for the copyist to guess at the proper letter, word, or phrase to be inserted.[8]

Now, the problem of the Lower Criticism is

[8] "Finally there are errors of which nothing can be said save that they are unaccountable. Every one who has done much writing must know that now and again he puts down words which have no meaning in the context in which he uses them, or (if he is copying) are wholly unlike the words which he should have copied. His mind has strayed, and he has written down words which some obscure train of association has put into his head. Errors such as these are sometimes made by the copyists of manuscripts, and since they have no traceable connection with the true text, they do not, as some kinds of error do, provide the means for their own correction. The same may be said of errors due to the defectiveness of the manuscript from which the copy has been made. A word may be defaced or obliterated, and the copyist must either omit it or guess at it; and since a copyist often has but a hazy idea of the sense of what he is copying, his guesses are often wide of the mark. Errors from mutilation would arise with especial ease during the period when papyrus was the material in use for literary purposes. The surface was more delicate than that of vellum, and therefore more liable to small and local injuries, which will obscure, or wholly obliterate, a word or a sentence. Here again the true reading is often irrecoverable except by guessing, and even if a guess be right, it can rarely be proved to be right; and an unverified guess can carry but little weight for practical purposes."—Kenyon, *The Textual Criticism of the New Testament*, p. 10.

to counteract as far as possible these numerous mistakes or various readings, which were bound to occur under the circumstances attending the transmission of the Scriptures through so long a period of time. The object of such criticism is to determine, with the highest degree of probability, what the biblical authors actually wrote. This, as we have seen, is a prerequisite to a true understanding or interpretation of their writings. Most of the work of the textual critics has been done since the invention of printing, and by far the best part of it within the last century. It has consisted (1) in ascertaining and weighing the documentary evidence—that is to say, in discovering, examining, and appraising all the manuscripts, large and small, contained in the university libraries and monasteries of Europe, or elsewhere; (2) in carefully comparing and recording their agreements and disagreements, however minute, and in studying the versions and quotations which might throw any side-lights upon these manuscripts; and (3) in constructing from these various sources a corrected text. The work has naturally divided itself into two departments for the Old and the New Testaments respectively, and the results may be best summarized separately.

1. In the case of the New Testament the available materials for the use of the textual critics are of the three classes just mentioned—

Greek manuscripts, ancient versions, and quotations from the New Testament books in early Christian writings. Such quotations are numerous because there quickly sprang up a rich Christian literature, increasing from the last quarter of the first century, in which the sayings of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles were widely repeated. These patristic quotations, as they are called, though not always accurate and, therefore, not of the highest value, are nevertheless much esteemed for the collateral evidence which they afford in judging what the original text must have been. Likewise the versions that were early produced, because the new religion rapidly spread among peoples of various languages, and that antedate the oldest manuscripts, are of great worth in helping to determine the still earlier source or sources from which they were made. At least one of these versions, the Syriac, dating from the second century, is of extreme importance. But the principal materials are the manuscripts, of which more than 3,800 are known and catalogued, while it is believed that two or three thousand others exist which have not yet been collated.[9] Among

[9] "For no literary production of antiquity is there such a wealth of manuscripts as for the New Testament. Our classical scholars would rejoice were they as fortunate with Homer or Sophocles, Plato or Aristotle, Cicero or Tacitus, as Bible students are with their New Testament. The oldest complete manuscript of Homer that we have dates from the thirteenth century, and only separate papyrus fragments go back to the Alexandrian age.

the chief of these known manuscripts there are, as stated in a previous chapter, two which belong to the fourth century—Codex Sinaiticus, at St. Petersburg, and Codex Vaticanus, at Rome. Two others belong to the fifth century —Codex Alexandrinus, at London, and Codex Ephraemi, at Paris. There is still another, Codex Bezae, which some authorities place in the fifth century, and some in the sixth.[10] All the rest are of later dates.[11]

With such materials at their service, the textual critics have studied them with wonderful patience. The variations have been carefully noticed, recorded and published, along with the

All that is extant of Sophocles we owe to a single manuscript dating from the eighth or ninth century in the Laurentian Library at Florence. But of the New Testament, 3,829 manuscripts have been catalogued up till the present (1901). A systematic search in the libraries of Europe might add still more to the list; a search in those of Asia and Egypt would certainly do so. Gregory believes that there are probably some two or three thousand manuscripts which have not yet been collated, and every year additional manuscripts are brought to light. Most of these are, of course, late, and contain only separate portions, some of them mere fragments, of the New Testament. Not a few, however, go much further back than our manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament and most of the Greek and Latin Classics."—Nestle, *Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*, pp. 33, 34.

[10] See F. C. Burkitt, "Text and Versions," *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. IV; also Jülicher, *op. cit.*, p. 605.

[11] A list of the more important manuscripts, indicating names, dates, contents, and character, is given by J. O. F. Murray, *The Cambridge Companion to the Bible* (1893), article "Textual Criticism of the New Testament." He also gives an account of the ancient versions, alluded to above, and likewise of the early ecclesiastical writers affording quotations from the New Testament. Thus the ordinary reader may see what materials the textual critics have to work upon.

evidence supporting them. The *interpretation* of this evidence opens the way for differences of judgment, and the experts are not altogether agreed on many details; in fact the work of this great department of scientific investigation is still going on. Hence a perfectly satisfactory text has not yet been constructed. Progress is being made, however, and the scholars hope to produce in the course of time a critical Greek text of the New Testament superior to any heretofore in use, and far superior to that from which most of our English translations have been made.

But it should not be inferred from the foregoing remarks that the uncertainties about the text of the New Testament are of serious moment, as affecting our understanding of the essential purport of its various writings. The different readings are, indeed, numerous, but the vast majority of them are of trifling significance, and it may be said with emphasis that the labors of the textual critics have immensely substantiated, instead of invalidating, the sources of our information regarding the teachings of the Christian Scriptures.[12] We know now bet-

[12] "Though it would not be right to pretend that the true reading can in all cases be determined with absolute certainty, or even to deny that there may be cases in which it has been lost altogether from all the available authorities, yet the materials are, beyond all comparison, more abundant, the results more secure, than is the case with regard to the text of any prose author of antiquity. The extremest margin of observed variation leaves

ter than scholars ever knew before what Jesus and the apostles actually did and said.

2. The textual criticism of the Old Testament presents quite a different situation. There are, indeed, as in the case of the New Testament, the same classes of materials, namely: manuscripts, versions, and ancient quotations; and, in addition, extensive paraphrases called Targums, and a great mass of commentary notes and explanations composing what is known as the Talmud. But the extant Hebrew manuscripts are of comparatively recent date, the oldest being no earlier than the ninth century of our era; and these are not in the same form, or even in exactly the same language, as those which the Old Testament Scriptures originally bore. The ancient Hebrew which was spoken and written by the Israelites prior to the Exile, and which the earliest and most important books of the Old Testament employed, was greatly modified by the breaking-up of the nation and its contact with other peoples through the Babylonian captivity and subsequent events. While this purer language continued to be used in writing

seven-eighths of the Text untouched, and while it affects here and there a favorite proof-text it leaves the whole voice of Scripture on the main problems of life and conduct practically unchanged. And even this debatable one-eighth may be reduced by the careful application of the methods indicated, till, in the judgment of the most competent critics, 'the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation hardly forms more than a thousandth part of the entire Text.'"—J. O. F. Murray, *Cambridge Companion*, p. 75.

and copying the sacred books, so that they were all produced and preserved in it down to the Maccabean period, yet it was gradually superseded by the Aramaic dialect, both in common speech and in ordinary writing. Hence it became the tendency and the practice to transliterate the Scriptures into the Aramaic, and in the time of Christ they probably existed altogether in this language, except the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Greek translation, called the "Septuagint." The Samaritan Pentateuch, dating from the fourth century B. C., preserves the ancient Hebrew with slight modifications, while two other similar specimens of it are found in the inscription on the Moabite Stone (about 890 B. C.) and in that on the Pool of Siloam (about 700 B. C.).

Now, in the course of this transition of the Scriptures from the ancient Hebrew to the Aramaic and thence to the Greek, and also by reason of the vicissitudes of the Jewish nation through which many precious literary works were lost, the text undoubtedly experienced some serious corruptions. The labors of the scribes became very important and were of a painstaking character; yet they exercised considerable editorial freedom, and introduced certain changes which remained permanently.[13] It

[13] See Professor Charles A. Briggs, *The Study of Holy Scripture* (1899), chap. vii.

does not appear that an attempt was made to establish an official text until after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A. D., or at about the time of the closing of the third section of the Old Testament Canon. Thereafter this established text prevailed, during the Talmudic period, until the era of the Masoretes (between the fifth and the eighth centuries).

The Masoretes were Jewish scholars who set out to determine, from the mass of Talmudic notes and comments, the true traditional text; they also supplied the necessary vowel-points, inasmuch as the writings had come down to them only in consonant form; and they recorded the traditional remarks, along with their own explanations, indicating various readings. The school of the Masoretes had its seat at Tiberias, but its labors were not confined to one place and could not be completed in one generation. They were performed with the most scrupulous care and fidelity, and when the work was finished the greatest pains were taken to secure its preservation and its use in the synagogues instead of any and all other forms of the text. It is this traditional or Masoretic text which has come down to our time, and from which the modern translations of the Old Testament have been made.[14]

[14] See Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts*, chap. iv; also *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. IV, art., "Text and Versions."

With these and other materials—the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Greek translation called the Septuagint, made in the third and second centuries before Christ, three minor Greek translations made in the second century A. D., the Syriac Version made prior to the fourth century A. D., the Old Latin Version made from the Greek, and Jerome's new translation of the Old Testament called the Vulgate—with all these materials, and some of less importance not here included, the textual critics seek to remove errors from the Masoretic Text by the methods of comparison and conjecture which experience and learning enable them to use with great skill. Their work is not yet finished, and perhaps will never be perfectly accomplished; but it has resulted, while proving the existence of mistakes, in demonstrating the essential trustworthiness of the Old Testament Scriptures, as they have come down to us, bringing the great ethical and religious messages which the servants of God so faithfully delivered in the ancient time.

II. The Higher Criticism has to do with the inner substance of the Scriptures. It deals with their literary features, undertaking to judge as to the character and origin of the biblical books, and as to their relation to one another. To this end it studies the style, structure, and thought of each particular writing; seeks to ascertain whether it is the work of a single author, or a

compilation; analyzes and dissects it, even to the extent of scrutinizing every word and syllable, every peculiar expression, every allusion to other writings; and tries to determine its date, its reliability, its dogmatic bearings and its spiritual worth. Above all, perhaps, it aims to understand the times and circumstances under which a given portion of Scripture was produced, because this will be likely to throw the most light upon its real purport. As Professor George T. Ladd says: "By the Higher Criticism is meant that study which tries to reproduce the influences and circumstances out of which the biblical books arose, and thus exhibit them as true children of their own time." [15] To the same effect writes Professor W. Robertson Smith: "The critical study of ancient documents means nothing else than a careful sifting of their origin and meaning in the light of history." [16] And Professor Charles A. Briggs says: "The questions of the Higher Criticism are questions of integrity, authenticity, credibility, and literary forms of the various writings that constitute the Bible." [17]

[15] *What is the Bible?* p. 126.

[16] *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 16.

[17] *Biblical Study*, p. 171. But see his later work, *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture* (1899), chaps. xi and xii. "The literary study of Holy Scripture is appropriately called Higher Criticism to distinguish it from the Lower Criticism, which devotes itself to the study of the original texts and versions." Similarly, H. S. Nash, *History of the Higher Criticism*, p. 15: "The lower or preparatory criticism aims at the

The special reason why such a work is necessary lies in the fact that the Scriptures, like other literary remains of antiquity, were produced in an uncritical, that is to say, an unscientific age, when people were not careful about keeping precise records of dates and authorities, and have reached us through many changes of circumstances and form which cannot fail to provoke some question as to their trustworthiness. In common with the productions of ancient historians and poets, the sacred literature of all the great nations of the remote past has been subjected to a rigid scrutiny, in modern times, to determine its real character and value, simply because the temper of our age is not satisfied with tradition, but wants verification; in other words, it wants *knowledge* wherever possible, or adequate reasons for its true faith.

But it must not be supposed that the Higher Criticism is entirely of recent origin. Like other significant movements in the realm of thought, it is the culmination of a long preparatory development. It has been growing ever since, in the later days of Judaism in Palestine, enough critical judgment was exercised to decide what writings should be admitted into the Old Testament Canon. Each of the three stages of this great

original text, cleared of corruptions and accretions. The Higher Criticism, the original text having been found, aims at the historical interpretation of Scripture."

process, determining respectively and successively the Canon of the Law, and then the Canon of the Prophets, and lastly the Canon of the Hagiographa, contributed to the increasing learning and discrimination lying behind what is now a noble science. In the early Christian centuries when the New Testament Canon was likewise slowly forming, criticism made a marked advance. It made another notable advance through the labors of the renowned scholar Origen,[18] who, during his sojourn at Cæsarea (232–254 A. D.), produced his great Hexapla, which laid the foundation for real textual criticism, and who became the foremost teacher of the early Church. Through the work of Jerome, too, it took another stride forward; a thousand years later, the Reformers promoted it still further, through their translations and their observations upon the respective merits of various biblical books; and within the last two centuries it has become a more strictly scientific method of Bible study, striving to free itself from dogmatic prepossession and traditionary bias, and to know the real inner structure, nature, and purport of Scripture as revealed by the historic conditions of its production. The work of the textual critics has thus been supplemented by that of the literary or "higher" critics, whose company embraces a host

[18] For a word of just appreciation of this illustrious Christian scholar, see Farrar, *History of Interpretation*, pp. 187, 188.

of brilliant names reaching from the early years of the eighteenth century[19] down to the present time.

These brief general statements are wholly inadequate to give an account of the rise and progress of the Higher Criticism, but limits of space do not allow an extended treatment, and only a few very simple examples may now be cited to illustrate its function. They will at least afford an elementary idea of the nature of the questions with which it deals.

1. Let us take the book of Isaiah. Tradition has taught us to suppose that this was all written by the author whose name it bears, who flourished about 739–701 B. C. But a critical examination shows that there are two very dissimilar

[19] See Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, chap. xi; also Nash, *History of the Higher Criticism of the New Testament*, especially chaps. v and vi. "It was in the eighteenth century that criticism became an historical force. The mental conditions of the time differed profoundly from those of the early Middle Ages. If the latter was the classic age of Tradition, then the eighteenth century was the classic age of scepticism touching Tradition. The typical reasoner in the first case was a man who looked at the Scriptures through the interpretation of the Fathers, and who looked at the universe through such fragments of ancient knowledge as had come down to him. Authority was the first word of the mediæval man. It was also his last. . . . . The typical man of the eighteenth century threw Tradition upon the dust heap. . . . . It was in this century that criticism was born. From the conditions and causes that gave it birth we may draw a definition of its essential nature. The main condition was the bankruptcy of Tradition, leaving the mind free to know and possess itself. The main cause was the sense of outlying facts. So we define criticism as a movement of the human mind, inspired by the consciousness of truth unknown, but knowable, and sustained by the resolution to serve the truth without fear or favor."—Nash, *op. cit.*, pp. 77, 78, 80, 81.

parts to it, viz., the first thirty-nine chapters, and the last twenty-seven. The former of these parts bears abundant evidence of having been written, with some exceptions, in the Assyrian period, long before the overthrow of Jerusalem by Babylon; while the latter part bears equal evidence of having been produced, with some exceptions also, in the time of Cyrus, king of Persia, whom it mentions by name as the Lord's "anointed," who should do his pleasure. Plainly the fact of such mention proves that there must have been a Cyrus to write about at the time; but this was more than a hundred and fifty years after Isaiah's day, as Cyrus did not capture Babylon until 538 B. C. For this and other strong reasons the Higher Criticism concludes that our present book of Isaiah consists mainly of two distinct works, the authorship of the second of which is unknown. But the fact that it is anonymous does not impair its value. It is just as truly the voice of its age—the highest, clearest, divinest voice of the generation that heard its message originally—as it would be if we were certain of the author's name. It bears the stamp of its time, and the very mood of the great prophet whose soul gave forth its inspiring word of promise may easily possess the intelligent, sympathetic reader who takes in the meaning of its glowing utterances today.

2. Take the forty-second Psalm, beginning, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks." It

has been widely believed that David wrote nearly all the Psalms. But surely no one can read this, after the idea has been suggested that it was written during the Captivity, without seeing at once what a new, fresh, earnest meaning it takes on. Listen to the plaintive strain of this mournful Israelite:

My tears have been my food day and night,
While they continually say unto me, Where is thy God?
These things I remember, and pour out my soul within me,
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holyday.

There is no difficulty in understanding that this Psalm must have been written at the time of the Babylonian Exile; but this was nearly five hundred years after David's age.

3. Take another Psalm, cxxxvii:

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive required of us songs,
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
Sing us one of the songs of Zion.
How shall we sing Jehovah's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her skill.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,

If I remember thee not;
If I prefer not Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.

It is clear that this could not have been written at any other time than that of the Captivity. These are some of the more simple cases in which the historical allusions easily enable the critic to determine the approximate dates of the writings under consideration.

4. A more difficult case is that of the Fourth Gospel, assigned by tradition to John the Evangelist, whose name it bears. This document is different from the other gospels. It opens with the expression of ideas belonging to the Logos philosophy prevalent in Alexandria, and these ideas color the work throughout. Jesus is not called "the Son of Man," as in the other three gospels, but "the Son of God," and the whole conception of his mission is peculiarly exalted and spiritual. The book is not so much a narrative of the outward events in the Master's career as it is a report of his attitude, his prevailing mood, his profound thought and feeling; and yet the report is evidently a reflection of the *author's interpretation* of it all. These and many other facts raise the question whether the gospel was really written by John, or by some non-Jewish Christian who was deeply influenced by Hellenistic mysticism, writing in the early part of the second century, or whether, indeed, it may not be

a composite work, embodying some of the memories of the apostle along with the philosophical ideas and arguments of his own followers. This problem is not yet solved, but it is one which the Higher Criticism has dealt with most industriously and which is still of the keenest interest. Perhaps the issue cannot be determined with certainty, but the whole historic foundation of Christianity has been shown by the discussion to be more solid than it could otherwise have been known to be.

The foregoing instances furnish merely a hint of the task which the Higher Criticism sets itself to perform; namely, to ascertain as exactly as possible the origin, structure, character, and purport of every biblical writing, with the aim solely to discover and make known the truth, in the firm conviction that the truth is of God and may be trusted to do God's work in the souls of men who are brought to understand it. As a grand result of the critical movement, the entire Bible is speaking to us today with a singular freshness of interest and power. The historic periods in which its various books were produced are brought nearer to us than ever before; our age is put into sympathy with the remote past; our minds and hearts are quickened anew by ancient thought, aspiration, and faith; and thus, perceiving and feeling the continuity of the mighty spiritual

development running through the ages, we are enabled by a *knowledge* of God's methods to put our own lives and labors more intelligently into harmony with his vast purposes.

CHAPTER IV

THE NEW VIEW OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

Granting the legitimacy and importance of biblical criticism as a large and fruitful branch of modern learning, we are prepared to ascertain the principal results which it has already produced. While its work is by no means finished, and we should therefore be duly cautious about accepting every dictum pronounced in its name, it has progressed far enough during the two centuries[1] and more of its growth, to have established certain general conclusions which necessarily and quite radically modify the popular conception of Scripture. Indeed, it is not too much to say that, to those who receive the truth which it has brought to light, the Bible becomes, again, a new book, fresh and quickening, filled with new meanings, revelations, and inspirations, that are higher, richer, more natural, and more vital than the old. This is much to claim, but the claim can be substantiated, and its substantiation means a great spiritual blessing for all who will welcome it. What these better perceptions are will appear as the changed view develops in this and the next few chapters; and though this view can be but meagerly presented here, even a

[1] See Professor George Adam Smith's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 31 f.

glimpse of it in outline will compensate for the attention and thought required for its comprehension.

I. First to be noticed among the main features of the new view of the Old Testament is the fact that *the several writings of which it is composed are to be regarded as literature.* Whatever may be their intrinsic value, and whatever account we may give of their inspiration, they come to us, first of all, as literary documents, and are to be approached and studied as such. This principle is fundamental in any proper treatment of the Holy Scriptures. While it is simple and is beginning to be widely accepted, it is still so new or so unappreciated in many circles that we shall need to continue to inculcate it until all classes are educated to its plain implications.

Nor is the Old Testament the only collection of sacred writings in existence besides the New Testament. As is well known, other peoples, in other countries and ages, have had their Holy Scriptures, many of which are still extant—those belonging to the Brahmans, the Buddhists, the Parsees of Persia, the Chinese, and the Mohammedans, not to speak of the ancient Egyptians and others. The truth is that the Hebrew or Jewish Bible is only one of the many bibles of the world, all of which are perhaps equally dear to their possessors. I say nothing as to their comparative merits; I merely state the fact, and

may add that we ought to rejoice that, as God has not left himself without witness in all the world, so there have not been wanting expressions and memorials of such witness in the form of sacred literatures as well as in that of rites and ceremonies.

Neither does our present Old Testament embrace all the writings of the Israelitish people prior to the time of Christ. In some editions of the English Bible there is printed a list of fourteen books called "The Apocrypha." Protestants generally consider these uninspired, and yet worth reading and preserving; but they have been received as canonical by the Roman Catholic Church, and were included in the Septuagint. They constitute a portion of Jewish literature just as truly as do the regular books of the Old Testament. Besides these there are now extant eighteen writings called "pseudepigraphical" (falsely ascribed), which must be classed as Jewish literature; and, still further, there are mentioned in the Old Testament itself sixteen other books which have entirely perished.[1] Thus it appears that there was a considerable literary activity among the Israelites the results of which are not contained in the Old Testament as we now have it. An explanation of the omission of

[1] See Sunderland's *The Bible; its Origin, Growth and Character*, p. 167; also Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 326 f.

those that survive belongs properly in an account of the formation of the Canon, upon which I do not here enter.

II. The second prominent feature of the new view of the Old Testament which must be fairly recognized is the truth that *its various writings are to be studied in connection with the national history of the Israelites.* It is impossible to understand them correctly if this principle be ignored. Like the former principle, just considered, it is very simple, but it is even more important. People have been so long accustomed to think of the Bible primarily as a supernatural communication from the Almighty to each individual of their own generation, that they have scarcely realized that it had an actual earthly history. Therefore we need to press this thought, that, no matter how much or how little the Bible contains which may be called supernatural and divine, it has come to us through human channels, under definite conditions of time, place, and race, which can be intelligently traced and clearly depicted; and that some knowledge of these facts is indispensable as a preparation for grasping the inner, spiritual purport of the Scriptures.

Unfortunately, such an historical conception or attitude has been difficult of attainment by the average reader on account of the non-chronological arrangement of the biblical books, together with the marginal dates and the headings

of chapters given in many editions of the Authorized Version. Genesis and the other portions of the Pentateuch come first, but very much in them was not written until a late date in Israelitish history—as late at least as the Babylonian Exile—while the work as a whole, the Torah or Law, was not put into its final, canonical shape until two or three centuries later. On the other hand, the books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah, which are in the latter third of the Old Testament as we have it, were produced quite a time before the Exile. Again, the Psalms, the Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes are placed in about the middle of the Old Testament; but most of these writings are of still later origin than the principal parts of the Pentateuch.

Now there is no reason why we may not, for purposes of study at least, rearrange the writings of the Bible to fit the improved chronology which modern learning has practically determined. Indeed, this is being done already, to a limited extent, and with great profit to the reader.[3] Besides, we can frame an outline of the national history of the Israelites that will enable us to understand the allusions which must be made to different periods and conditions in speak-

[3] For one example, see the series of handbooks called *The Messages of the Bible,* by Professors Sanders and Kent, Scribner, 1898; also Kent's *The Student's Old Testament Logically and Chronologically Arranged and Translated,* Scribner, 6 vols., Vols. I and II published 1905. Exceedingly valuable.

ing of the authorship and dates of various works contained in the Old Testament.[4] Such an historical sketch, as concise as I can well give, and without treating the origin and early migration of the Hebrews, is presented at this point as a preparation for what is to follow in the later portions of this chapter.

1. We will begin by accepting Professor Toy's assignment of the year 1330 B. C. as the approximate date of the exodus from Egypt under Moses. The Israelites invaded and conquered Canaan about 1300 B. C. The conquest was undoubtedly gradual, and for two hundred years society was inchoate, life was rough and religion crude. Slowly the social elements united and fused, and a kingdom was established, with Saul as king, in the year 1060 B. C. After twenty years he was succeeded by David, and he by his son Solomon, each of whom reigned, it is said, forty[5] years. Outwardly this was a brilliant period, the national life was deepened and strengthened, and the temple built in Jerusalem indicated the growth of a distinctive form of religion.

2. In the year 960 B. C. a rebellion and a division of the kingdom took place, and for two hun-

[4] Here, too, much valuable aid has been recently afforded by such popular works as Professor C. H. Toy's brief *History of the Religion of Israel*, Professor C. F. Kent's three vols. on Hebrew and Jewish history, and Professor C. H. Cornill's *History of the People of Israel*, and his other books.

[5] Forty is a round number, often used in the Bible, and not to be taken as necessarily exact.

dred and forty years there were two kingdoms, namely, the northern called *Israel,* and the southern called *Judah.* This was a period of strife and trial, that naturally evoked the deeper thoughts and feelings of the people, which found expression in a few noble writings and in the preaching of the early prophets. In the year 720 B. C. the Assyrian army overthrew Samaria, the capital of the northern kingdom, and carried into captivity the flower of the population. Under the depressing influence of this calamity other prophets arose to exalt and purify the religious life of the people of the southern kingdom. But in less than one hundred and fifty years this, too, fell into the hands of a foreign power, Babylonia, and a second and a third deportation of captives took place. Then, indeed, was the whole land desolate, while the exiles were in bondage and sorrow. The Exile lasted about fifty years, to 536 B. C.; it was a productive literary period, and in important respects greatly modified the national religion.

3. Cyrus, King of Persia, having taken Babylon (538 B. C.), gave the Jews permission to return to their native land. Some, but comparatively few,[6] availed themselves of the privilege, and in time, amid many hardships, rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and restored the worship of the temple; indeed, they went beyond all their former zeal in developing the priesthood and elaborating

[6] See Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life after the Exile,* chap. i.

a ritual. Hence this became distinctively the priestly period, lasting roughly from the Exile to the time of Christ. During it there was considerable literary activity, especially in the earlier centuries of it; but much of its product was shaped and colored by the priestly or ritualistic spirit. It was also a time of contact with foreigners, and of oppression by them—by Persia, Greece, Syria, Egypt, and Rome. This was galling, but it could not crush, and in some respects it intensified, the messianic hope that now hastened toward its consummation.

Bearing in mind these general historical facts, we shall be qualified to appreciate what the biblical critics mean when they assign a given work to a particular period; and we shall do well to remember also that, throughout the entire history from Moses to Jesus, it was the nation that produced the Scriptures, and not the Scriptures the nation.

III. But by far the most important feature of the new view of the Old Testament is *a recognition of the late dates and the composite character of most of its writings.* The significance and application of this principle will become clear as we proceed to examine some of the chief portions of these venerable literary remains.

We do not know when the art of writing commenced; nor does it matter very much. It may have been practiced a long time by some peoples

before it was known to others. For example, it is certain that the Greeks and Romans had a large body of the highest kind of literature centuries before the Teutonic tribes of northern Europe were even semi-civilized. So the Egyptians and Chaldeans may have been perfectly familiar with writing, and may have had extensive written records, before there was any Israelitish nation in existence; in fact we now know positively that this was the case;[7] yet this does not prove that Moses and the early Israelites knew how to write, any more than the fact that nearly all New Englanders could read and write, at the middle of the nineteenth century, proves that nearly all the negroes of the South could do likewise at that time.[8] And even if Moses was really "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians," so that he might have written a hundred books, it does not at all follow that he wrote the Pentateuch,[9] or,

[7] Professor Kent says: "In order rightly to understand the growth of Israel's institutions it is necessary to remember that the Hebrews were among the youngest of the Semitic peoples, and therefore the inheritors of at least twenty centuries of civilization. The magnitude of their debt to the nations which antedated them and became their teachers is undoubtedly far greater than has hitherto been imagined."—*Messages of Israel's Lawgivers,* p. 5. So writes Professor Friedrich Delitzsch: "Now that the pyramids have opened their depths and the Assyrian palaces their portals, the people of Israel, with their literature, appears but the youngest member of a venerable and hoary group of nations."

[8] For a similar remark see Professor G. A. Smith, *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament,* p. 59, note.

[9] For a sane and scholarly discussion of this point, see *ibid.,* pp. 56–67.

indeed, anything else; although we may readily enough believe that he did write down, or engrave upon stone tablets, some of the fundamental laws ascribed to him. Probably Jesus knew how to write, but we have no knowledge of any literary work which he produced.

Again, we in modern times and in our western world, with our more orderly methods of thinking and working, can hardly understand how the ancients composed their books. Today an author writes out his thoughts in continuous, logical sequence; and if he quotes he gives references, is conscientious about using materials, and would not think of publishing his work over the name of some other and more illustrious personage. Not so, however, in the Bible times. Says Professor Driver, of Oxford:

> The authors of the Hebrew historical books—except the shortest, as Ruth and Esther—do not, as a modern historian would do, rewrite the matter in their own language; they excerpt from the sources at their disposal such passages as are suitable to their purpose, and incorporate them in their work, sometimes adding matter of their own, but often (as it seems) introducing only such modifications of form as are necessary for the purpose of fitting them together, or accommodating them to their plan. The Hebrew historiographer, as we know him, is essentially a compiler or arranger of pre-existing documents; he is not himself an original author.[10]

Professor W. Robertson Smith wrote to the same effect, and said further:

[10] *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 3.

If a man copied a book, it was his to add to and modify as he pleased, and he was not in the least bound to distinguish the old from the new. If he had two books before him to which he attached equal worth, he took large extracts from both, and harmonized them by such additions or modifications as he felt to be necessary.[11]

Understanding all this, we are not surprised to learn that many authors, desiring to gain currency for their books, ascribed them to distinguished persons of former times—as, for instance, the writer of the book of Daniel did, who is thought to have written his work about 168 or 167 B. C., but in the person of the Daniel of Babylonian times.

Now, in the light of the foregoing considerations, we may take up some of the Old Testament writings and inquire about their origin and structure.

I. THE PENTATEUCH

Naturally we begin with the Pentateuch, popularly known as the "five books of Moses"—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Jews called them, collectively, the Torah, or, as we should say, the Law; but the term Pentateuch, meaning "five-fold book," has prevailed largely since the Septuagint translation (into Greek) was made, about the second century B. C. For two thousand years or more tradition

[11] *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. III, p. 638, art., "Bible."

has ascribed the authorship of these books to Moses, although they themselves make no such claim, excepting portions of Deuteronomy. Undoubtedly there is reason for presuming that tradition, which is simply customary opinion, has some basis in fact, or else it would not exist; but such reason is slight in the present instance. It may be natural to assume that the authorship of a literary work is singular, because ordinarily this is the case; yet today we have examples of collaboration, even in the production of stories. It is natural, perhaps, to suppose that water and air are simple parts of the material universe; but modern chemistry shows us that they are not really simples at all, but compounds. It might be thought a natural presupposition that a ray of sunshine is simply a stream of pure white light, and, but for science, one might never have dreamed that there are over half a dozen different colors in it that can be distinctly separated from one another; yet such is really the case, and we have only to pass a ray of sunshine through a prism to afford an ocular demonstration of the fact. Just so it is with the composition of the Pentateuch: without evidence to the contrary, we might accept the traditional belief that it is the work of a single author; but upon a clear proof that it is a union of several different works, we are compelled to give up the customary notion, and accept the true verdict.

For a century and a half the Higher Critics have been toiling patiently over this problem, and they have reached, not, indeed, a unanimous, but a very general, agreement as to the following conclusions:

1. That the Book of Joshua, immediately after the Pentateuch, belongs with it as an organic part of the same great work; so that we should speak of the Hexateuch, or first *six* books of the Bible, as a whole.

2. That this Hexateuch is composed of four different main writings or documents, produced at different times by different authors, which were finally welded together, with editorial additions, in the early part of the priestly period of Israelitish history, that is to say, after the return from Babylon; and that these four main writings are themselves more or less composite.

3. That these four general documents have each such strongly marked characteristics of style, phraseology and "local color" as to be easily distinguishable to the trained critic, in their principal features; so that they can be, and have been, separated and printed in different types, or (as in the Polychrome Bible) in different hues, with confirming results not less striking than those yielded by the prismatic analysis of a ray of sunshine.

Now it is proper to ask how these conclusions have been wrought out; and a simple, concise ex-

planation is here given. First, it had been noticed, among other pecularities, that there are frequent repetitions of the same things, but in different words, in the narratives of the Pentateuch; and especially that there are, in Genesis, two distinct accounts of the creation, one of them being in the first chapter, and the other in the second; and that these vary considerably. Second, it was observed that the first of these accounts uses the word Elohim (translated God) to represent the Divine Being, while the other uses the term which we commonly render by our English word "Jehovah." This discovery was made by Jean Astruc, a French physician, in 1753, who was the first to conjecture and demonstrate the compilation of the book from at least two older narratives. Third, this theory was shortly afterward (1779) taken up in Germany by Eichhorn, who made a list of several other words peculiar to each Genesis-writer, the existence of which had been inferred from Astruc's disclosure; and the clues thus furnished were followed up, by Ilgen (1798) and many subsequent critics, with slowly increasing results elaborating, correcting, and confirming various theories, until the present consensus of opinion has been established.[12]

[12] A brief sketch of this development is given by Professor George F. Moore in his introduction to Bacon's *Genesis of Genesis*; also G. A. Smith's *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, pp. 33–41; Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 378 ff.

Today, then, it may be said that the overwhelming judgment of critical scholarship is to the effect that the Hexateuch as we now have it originated in substantially the following manner:

First, there was produced, in the ninth century before Christ, an historical work which we call the Jehovistic Writing, or, more briefly the Jehovist (or Jahvist), or simply J, because of its use of the word Jehovah (Yahweh) for God (because also the author belonged to the southern kingdom, Judah).[13] Shortly afterward a second work was produced, called now the Elohist Writing, or the Elohist, or E, so designated because it employs *Elohim* for God (and because also this writer was an Ephraimite).[14] Both of these works may be said to have appeared between 850 and 750 B. C.,[15] and were subsequently united. Then a third book, consisting essentially of our Deuteronomy, and hence called the Deuteronomist, or D, was produced, somewhere between 660 and 622 B. C. and later this was joined to the two preceding works.[16] Next a Priestly Code

[13] See Bacon's *Genesis of Genesis*, p. 21, note.

[14] *Ibid.*

[15] See Professor W. E. Addis, *Documents of the Hexateuch*, Vol. I, p. lxxxii; also L. W. Batten's *The Old Testament from the Modern Point of View* (James Pott & Co., 1899), chap. iv; and especially Professor C. F. Kent's *The Student's Old Testament*, Vol. I, with table giving classification of analyzed contents, and the parallel narratives in a new translation.

[16] Respecting the date of Deuteronomy, see Addis, *Documents of the Hexateuch*, Vol. II (1898), for a reconsideration of the question. See also articles on Deuteronomy in *Encyclopedia*

was written, not far from 500 B. C., in the interest of the temple and the ritual; and this, giving a kind of skeleton of Israelitish history, covers it with the flesh and blood of ceremonial legislation. Authorities differ somewhat sharply as to the date of this writing, but not as to its existence. Finally, about the middle of the fifth century, all these documents were united by one or more editors or redactors, who made some changes and additions, and were henceforth promulgated as the *Torah* of the Jewish people.[17]

Biblica and Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible;* J. Estlin Carpenter and C. Harford Battersby, *The Hexateuch* (1900), chap. x; and Driver's *Introduction,* chap. on Deuteronomy.

[17] Professor Charles A. Briggs describes the situation thus: "Looking at the facts of the case, we note that the careful analysis of the Hexateuch by so large a number of the ablest biblical scholars of the age has brought about general agreement as to the following points: (*a*) An Elohistic writing extending through the Hexateuch, written by a priestly writer, commonly, therefore, designated by P. (*b*) A Jahvistic writing, also extending through the Hexateuch, designated by J. (*c*) A second Elohistic writing in close connection with the Jahvist, designated by E. (*d*) The Deuteronomic writing, chiefly in Deuteronomy and Joshua, with a few traces in the earlier books, designated by D. (*e*) These writings have been compacted by redactors who first combined J with E, then J E with D, and at last J E D with P. Notwithstanding the careful way in which these documents have been compacted into a higher unity by these successive editings, the documents may be distinguished by characteristic differences, not only in the use of the divine names, but also in language and style; in religious, doctrinal, and moral conceptions; in various interpretations of the same historic persons and events, and in their plans and methods of composition; differences which are no less striking than those which characterize the four Gospels."—*The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch,* p. 68.

Elsewhere the same scholar says: "There are no Hebrew professors on the continent of Europe, so far as I know, who would deny the literary analysis of the Pentateuch into the four

The discovery and elucidation of the foregoing facts constitute one of the great achievements of modern learning. In its way, the demonstration is as important and revolutionary as was the Copernican theory in astronomy, or the Darwinian doctrine of "Natural Selection." Its inevitable practical bearings cannot be fully indicated here, but it may be said that it must afford us a new conception of the history of the Israelitish people, and must modify to no small extent our acceptance and use of the first six books of the Bible. We can no longer regard these books as a homogeneous, continuous, orderly, comprehensive, accurate history of the origin and course of human events in this world; or as a textbook of science; or even as a compendium of morals and religion. We must regard them rather as an accretive compila-

great documents. The professors of Hebrew in the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh, and tutors in a large number of theological colleges, hold to the same opinion. A very considerable number of the Hebrew professors of America are in accord with them. There are, indeed, a few professional scholars who hold to the traditional opinion, but these are in a hopeless minority. I doubt whether there is any question of scholarship whatever in which there is a greater agreement among scholars than in this question of the literary analysis of the Hexateuch."—*Presbyterian Review,* April, 1887.

Similar testimonies from other writers might be easily adduced, but would needlessly encumber these pages. Besides the references already given, see Professor J. E. McFadyen's *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church* (1903), chap. iii, for a good account of differences of opinion among the critics, with an admirable summary of general agreements. Driver's *Introduction* and Kent's *Student's Old Testament,* Vol. I, will be likely to be most serviceable to the general reader. *The Documents of the Hexateuch* (1892–98), in two vols. by W. E. Addis, is a valuable work.

tion of various historical sketches, comprising ancient fragments of story and song, legend and myth, some of which have drifted down from the time of Moses or beyond; and comprising also connected tales, ritualistic ordinances, codes of laws, and earnest religious instructions and appeals—all expressive of the ideas, faith, and customs of the Hebrews at different periods of their national life. By this literature, with an outline of Hebrew history clearly in mind, we may trace and illustrate, with fresh interest and deep sympathy, the progress of the nation and the development of the national religion;[18] without such an historical sketch, and without an understanding of the composite character of these ancient books, our reading of them must continue to produce intellectual confusion, however they may imbue us with an earnestly devout spirit. With the sketch and the analysis before us, we may have the blessing of *clear information,* together with the same earnestly devout spirit; and the information will be true—we shall be no longer out of harmony with modern knowledge.

II. OTHER WRITINGS

In a similar way we must revise the traditional opinion of many of the other Old Testament

[18] For the clearer, truer insight into the nature and process of this development which the new learning affords, see Professor Karl Budde's *Religion of Israel to the Exile* (Putnam, 1899).

books. Limits of space forbid a treatment of all these, and, indeed, allow only the briefest remarks concerning a few of them. The reader who cares to pursue his inquiries further may obtain instruction from some of the works already mentioned, and it is hoped that sufficient interest will have been awakened by this cursory chapter to prompt to such more extensive and particular study. The whole subject is engaging, enlightening, and wonderfully profitable.

1. Following the Hexateuch is the book of Judges, consisting of narratives that vividly depict the social conditions prevailing in Palestine between the Conquest and the days of Samuel. The work is believed to have been drawn from some of the same sources, oral and written, which entered into the earlier documents of the Hexateuch, and to have been compiled by an unknown writer shortly before or in the time of the Exile (650–550 B. C.). It contains later editorial additions, and gives a strongly religious interpretation of the history of the remote period which it covers.[19]

2. The two books of Samuel (they were only one originally; the Septuagint divided them) take up the history of Israel where the Hexateuch leaves it, and carry forward the account nearly through the reign of David. They partake largely

[19] See Bennett and Adeney's "Introduction;" Toy's "History of the Religion of Israel;" and G. F. Moore's "Judges" in the *International Critical Commentary*, Scribner (T. & T. Clark).

of the character of Judges, but are thought to have been composed somewhat earlier.

3. The two books of Kings, constituting a single work, like I and II Samuel, bring the history down to the Babylonian Captivity. They refer frequently to other writings not known to us, such as the *Book of the Acts of Solomon,* the *Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel,* and the *Books of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah.* The work is Deuteronomic in character, and was substantially completed before the end of the Exile, only a few portions being subsequently added. Like all the preceding works, it is composite in structure.

4. I and II Chronicles are a duplicate[20] and inferior history, originally constituting, with Ezra and Nehemiah, a single work. It undertakes to cover the history from Adam to the end of Nehemiah's reign, is compiled of extracts from earlier documents, and is dominated by the priestly spirit. Dr. Driver dates all these writings not earlier than 332 B. C.[21] Professor Toy dates them about 300;[22] while Bennett and Adeney say 300–250.[23]

5. The remaining portions of the Old Testament, especially the great Prophets, the Psalms, and Job, are altogether too important to be con-

[20] The Septuagint title, "Paralipomena," correctly indicates the character of the work as duplicate and supplementary.

[21] *Introduction,* pp. 486, 511.

[22] *Judaism and Christianity,* p. 55.

[23] *Biblical Introduction,* pp. 108, 109.

sidered in a few pages; and this chapter is already long enough to have served its main purpose, which has been merely to afford a glimpse of the new view of the Old Testament resulting from modern scholarship. The salient features of this view which have been thus far presented may be taken as a hint of the changed aspects that the other books, just mentioned, may be expected to assume upon due study. The reader will learn that there were earlier and later prophets in Israel; that the prophetical writings, as they have come down to us, are more or less composite; that the Psalms are mostly late productions, originating in the period after the Exile, and are religious poems or hymns voicing the spiritual aspiration and struggle of the Jewish nation; that the Proverbs are collections of wise sayings, belonging to what is called the Wisdom Literature of Israel, and necessarily written by different authors at different times; while Job is a sublime poem grappling with the great problem of the suffering of the just man, and produced by some unknown writer, with probably later additions, shortly before the Exile, or possibly as late as 300 B. C.—it is impossible to determine the exact date of such a work.[24] Each of these subjects, in itself, is a large and instructive topic, of profound interest and importance to one who really cares to

[24] "The Book of Job may spring from any date between the Exile and 300 B C."—Professor Geo. Adam Smith, *Modern Criticism*, etc., p. 286.

know something of the history and character of this sacred, noble, inspiring literature. Happily, much information respecting each is now available, and those who have read this chapter to the present point are urged to go on with their study by consulting other works, more learned as well as more particular and complete.

It is to be remembered that many matters of detail are still unsettled, many problems are still unsolved. The analysis of the Hexateuch, as well as that of the other composite works, is by no means perfect or fully agreed upon by scholars, especially in its minute phases; quite likely, such entire agreement may never be attained, and the precise dates of many portions of the Old Testament may never be absolutely fixed. But enough has been demonstrated beyond question, in the broader aspects of the case, to call for a reconstruction of the traditional conception both of Hebrew history and of the origin of the Hebrew Scriptures. As this reconstruction comes gradually to be wrought out, and shall at length become clear and familiar, first among university professors and ministers, then among Sunday-school teachers, and at last in the popular mind, it will be the means of a great education regarding the place which Israel has filled in the world, regarding the works and ways of Divine Providence among the nations, and regarding the peculiar excellences of those ancient writings which have

served to convey to mankind the Word of Life, and which constitute so large a part of what we justly call our Holy Bible.

If, under this new view of the Old Testament, the individual writer of Scripture seems to be of less importance than hitherto, the importance of the nation increases; so that the Old Testament, or almost any given book in it, becomes not merely the voice of a single soul, but rather *the voice of a people,* expressing its deep longing, its expanding life, its growing ethical and religious faith, and its intensifying devotion to the one living and true God, whose mighty providence is forever its refuge and strength.[25]

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE A

Principal Events in Hebrew History

	Authorities.		
	Toy[1] (1882)	Kautzsch[2] (1897)	Budde[3] (1899)
	B. C.	B. C.	B. C.
Exodus from Egypt under Moses..	1330	a1320	a1250
Invasion of Canaan.....	1300	a1280	b1200
David made king.....	1040	a1000	1000
Division of the kingdom.....	960	a933	933
Accession of Ahab of Israel.....	903	a876	876–54
Downfall of Omri dynasty.....	842	842	842
The prophets Amos and Hosea....	785	779–43	760–45
The call of Isaiah.....	....	740	740
Accession of Hezekiah of Judah..	726	....	725
Fall of the northern kingdom....	720	722	722
Siege of Jerusalem by Sennacherib..	....	701	701
Manasseh, king of Judah.....	639	—643	696–41
Josiah, king of Judah.....	639	640–9	639–8

[25] After reading the above chapter a careful perusal of Budde's *Religion of Israel to the Exile* (Putnam) and of Cheney's *Jewish Religious Life After the Exile* (Putnam) would prove illuminating as well as keenly interesting.

	Authorities.		
	Toy[1] (1882)	Kautzsch[2] (1897)	Budde[3] (1899)
	B. C.	B. C.	B. C.
The prophet Jeremiah	626–580	628—	626—
Reforms of Josiah based on Deut.	....	622	621
Death of Josiah at Megiddo	609	609	604
First capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar	....	....	597
Fall of Jerusalem, beginning of Babylonian Captivity	586	586	586
Babylon taken by Cyrus	539	539	538
Return of some Jews to Canaan	536	a536	....
Visit of Ezra to Jerusalem	457	458	....
Nehemiah in Jerusalem	444	445	....
Building of Samaritan temple at Gerezim	....	a335	....
The Jews submit to Alexander the Great	....	332	....
Maccabaean War	a165	166	....
Jerusalem taken by Pompey	63	....	....

a—about. b—before.

[1] *History of the Religion of Israel.*

[2] *The Literature of the Old Testament,* with chronological tables (Putnam) translated by John Taylor. Especially full and valuable. See pp. 167–205.

[3] *Religion of Israel to the Exile.*

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE B

Approximate Dates of Old Testament Books

A very brief tabulation of the more important dates, some of which are necessarily very uncertain, and are only offered provisionally, will show at a glance the main bearings of the critical reconstruction of the literary history.[1]

	B.C.
Traditions, war ballads, and other songs	1200–1000
The prophetic history of the Jehovist document	850
The prophetic history of the Elohist document	750
Amos and Hosea	750–735
Isaiah	740–700
Micah	725–690
Nahum	650
Zephaniah	630
Deuteronomy (written probably in Manasseh's reign), published	621

	B. C.
Jeremiah	626–586
Habakkuk	600
Exile 597 B. C. (first deportation) 586 (second deportation) to	538
Ezekiel	592–570
Lamentations	586
All the historical books up to Kings edited in the spirit of Deuteronomy	600–560
Deutero-Isaiah	540
Haggai and Zechariah	520
Psalter, collected, edited, and largely composed	520–150
Priestly Code (Leviticus, etc.)	500–450
Malachi	460
Ruth	450
Joel, Jonah, Obadiah, Job	450–400
Pentateuch in practically its present form, before	400
Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah	350–250
Song of Songs	350
Proverbs	300
Ecclesiastes	250
Daniel	167
Esther	150

[1] From Professor John E. McFadyen's *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, Appendix, pp. 369, 370. The paragraph and the table conclude the Appendix, which gives an admirable "Outline of the Results of Old Testament Criticism." The whole volume is written in a temperate spirit, at once progressive and conservative (1903).

For a more detailed and complete exhibit, with a grouping of dates into main periods, and with an analysis of the literary material, assigning particular parts to their respective times, see the chronological chart prefixed to Professor C. F. Kent's *Student's Old Testament* (Scribners, 1904), Vol. I. Very valuable.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW VIEW OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

Seeing that biblical criticism has given us a new and better understanding of the Old Testament, we shall be eager to learn what it has to say about the New Testament. Nor is its word less clear and strong, less instructive and quickening in the latter than in the former. The pages of both sets of Scripture are more luminous with truth and beauty now than ever before, because of the increasing light which the lamp of learning has shed upon them; and it is our inestimable privilege to read their divine meanings with a larger measure of intellectual and spiritual satisfaction than has been vouchsafed to any former generation. If we shall but prove worthy of our inheritance by trying to enter into its full possession and proper use, we shall be rewarded by some grander outlooks and enriched by some deeper experiences than we have dreamed of hitherto.

The first thing to claim our attention is the fact that a close relationship exists between the two Testaments. The literary activity of the Jewish people continued down into the first century of our era, and some of its products may be seen in the apocryphal books of the Old Testament, as well as in the writings of Philo [1] and Josephus.[2]

[1] 20 B. C.–40 A. D. [2] 37–95 A. D.

The first main collection of Hebrew Scriptures, called the Law, had not been canonized until about the time of Ezra, or 445–440 B. C.; the second called the Prophets, about 200 B. C.; and the third, called the Hagiographa—including the Psalms, the Proverbs, Job, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, the Chronicles and Daniel—did not fully receive this distinction until about the close of the first Christian century.[3] While the deep, free and powerful spirit of the old Israelitish prophets was wanting in the later Judaism, and a narrow, rigid legalism took its place, yet on the whole there was some progress in thought, and the national faith was perhaps more intense than ever. The ideas and ideals, the traditions and hopes of the historic form of religion were still vigorously maintained and were immediately implicated in the origin of Christianity. Hence we cannot go far in a correct treatment or comprehension of the New Testament unless we see its vital connection with the Old.[4] The two fields of inquiry lie side by side;

[3] "After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D., the Jewish rabbins established themselves at Jamnia. Two assemblies seem to have been held there; one about 90 A. D., the other in 118 A. D. At these assemblies, under the presidency of Eleazar ben Azariah, the canonicity of the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes was discussed. They were finally decided to be canonical, and so the third Canon of the Old Testament was closed for the Hebrews."—Briggs, *Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, p. 130. See especially Ryle, *Canon of the Old Testament* (1892), pp. 198 f.

[4] Indeed, the Old Testament alone, apart from the Apocrypha, is not sufficient for a full illumination of the New Testament. See Introduction to the *Temple Bible*, volume on the "Apocrypha, Esdras I and II."

the critical study of the one collection of sacred writings is directly related to that of the other; essentially the same principles must prevail in both cases; and in some respects the results in the one instance are quite similar to those in the other.

If, then, it was right to say, in the preceding chapter, that the Old Testament Scriptures are to be regarded as literature, and are to be studied with reference to the history of the people that produced them, the same two cardinal rules must guide us in dealing with the New Testament Scriptures. Otherwise we shall make little headway in our effort to understand them. Until we can look upon them as literary documents bearing the peculiar birth-marks of their time, we cannot make them seem natural or real, and cannot relate them to human life in an impressive and truly helpful way. It is one of the principal faults of the old-fashioned method of reading them that an air of mystery, unnaturalness, unreality has been inevitably thrown about them; and it is one of the chief services of the new mode of treating them that it has steadily insisted upon viewing them primarily as the natural products of religious minds working normally, influenced by the conditions of their age and country, and employing language in the ordinary manner of other writers. Thus it teaches us to let these works speak their own message in their own way, to listen humbly and reverently to their slightest

word, and to try to find the living reality and power with which they are able to touch our hearts; leaving whatever divine character they may possess or whatever divine truth they may contain to be apprehended as a result rather than as a beginning of our inquiry. Assuredly we ought to have sufficient confidence in their divine quality to trust it to attest itself in due time by such a procedure on our part.

Now the period covered by the New Testament writings is comparatively brief. Not more than one hundred years were required to embrace all those creative literary activities which took shape in these priceless documents; and most of them, and by all means the most important of them, excepting possibly the Gospel of John,[5] were produced within the first century. Of course it was the career of Jesus Christ and the work of his followers which gave rise to this literature, and it constitutes our best source of information regarding them and the events connected with them. Yet it is not our only source. As in the case of the Old Testament, so in that of the New, many supplementary works, large and small, were written which were never canonized as Scripture. Nearly fifty such are still extant, in whole or in part; while perhaps as many more

[5] The question regarding the date of the Fourth Gospel, whether falling in the last decade of the first century or in the first decade (or even later) of the second century, is not yet fully settled.

have perished, and are known to scholars only by quotations from them or references to them in other Christian writings. The chief of those which have been preserved may be seen and read as the New Testament Apocrypha.[6] They are interesting and highly valuable for the side light which they throw upon the thought and life of the early Church; they show, more fully than the New Testament alone can do, the depth and force of the Christian movement; and they serve to increase our appreciation of the fact that the New Testament writings themselves are to be treated, first of all, as literature.[7] We may be assured, however, that these latter are, on the whole, unquestionably the *best* literature culled from the entire mass—the seed-wheat of the full harvest. The law of "the survival of the fittest" prevails in the realm of human products, as well as in the animal and vegetable kingdoms; and we may be confident that the sway of this law has given us

[6] A good English edition is *The Apocryphal New Testament being all the Gospels, Epistles and Other Pieces now extant, etc., not included in the New Testament*, London, printed for William Howe, 1820. Better is the *Temple Bible* volume on the "New Testament Apocrypha," recent. (London: Dent; Philadelphia: Lippincott.)

[7] Those who would like to know more about this extra-canonical literature, and the reasons for its rejection, should make some study of the history of the New Testament Canon, a special but exceedingly instructive branch of inquiry. For this purpose they may consult Westcott, *The Canon of the New Testament;* Jülicher, *Introduction to the New Testament*, pp. 459–566; and E. C. Moore, *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, chap. II.

the best fruits of early Christianity in our present New Testament.[8]

This collection of writings comprises twenty-seven different books, large and small—though none of them is very large, and several are very small. The arrangement of them is familiar: first, four fragmentary biographies of Jesus, called "Gospels;" second, an historical book, "The Acts of the Apostles," giving some account of the spread of primitive Christianity; then, twenty-one letters, of which fourteen have been ascribed to Paul, two to Peter, one to Jude, one to James, and three to John; and lastly, an apocalyptical work, called "The Revelation," and ascribed to John also.

Now when and by whom were these books written; how reliable are they; and what do they disclose concerning the origin and primary character of Christianity? These are the essential questions which have engaged the New Testament critics in study and controversy for a long time. Neither the study nor the controversy is yet finished; there are still many unsettled ques-

[8] "As a simple matter of fact, too, we can not overlook the immense difference between the New Testament as a whole and even the best of the Christian literature of the second century. We are interested in the later literature; but it simply does not seem to us to possess any such significance as the New Testament. However we may explain the difference, we are bound to recognize the fact. The explanation is perhaps not far to seek—the immediate, almost unconscious, reflection of the greatness of Christ's own personality."—Henry Churchill King, *Reconstruction in Theology*, 1901, p. 166.

tions, as well as wide divergences of opinion among eminent scholars. Nevertheless, certain grand results have been reached which may be fairly regarded as *established;* and these are of such a nature as to give us a *general conception* of the origin and character of the New Testament Scriptures so radically different from the traditionary conception as to call for its clear presentation, in order that it may be understood and judged by each reader according to his ability.

It is impossible, in a single chapter, to consider all of the New Testament writings, or to state any but a few of the main facts respecting those principal portions of the literature which can be briefly discussed. These facts will have to be taken merely as a hint of methods pursued and conclusions indicated in the treatment of the remaining portions in the numerous works of the biblical scholars.

A preliminary remark should be made: The dates, titles, and ascriptions of authorship of the New Testament books, as given in the Authorized Version, are not very trustworthy. They were mainly supplied by copyists, translators, or editors, and must be often disregarded. Moreover, the fact that a given book is written in the person of a certain author is not final proof that he wrote it. The New Testament age was not a critical, scientific one, and it was no unusual (or, as then considered, improper) thing for a writer to attach

the name of some distinguished person to his own production, in order to draw attention to it.[9] Such a proceeding was not peculiar to the New Testament authors, and it in nowise reflects upon their honor. The question of authorship in each particular case must be determined by the evidence.[10]

Now the fact that the gospels come first in the New Testament has doubtless led many to suppose that they were written first. But they were among the latest to assume their present form, and were placed first in the existing arrangement of New Testament books because of their foremost rank in importance, and also because they record the life of Jesus, which came first in the history of Christianity. The earliest New Testament writings were some of the letters of Paul. It is worth

[9] "Such writers (apocalyptists) ascribed their ideas to 'Ezra,' or to 'Enoch,' or to 'Daniel,' and to other great ancestors. For they came easily to fancy that those old heroes had had such visions; and when the title 'Ezra' or 'Esdras' was put at the head of the composition, it was set there in perfect honesty, and out of conviction that this was the will of the great Spirit. . . . . [A writer] would therefore unhesitatingly lay his writings on the knees of anyone whom he counted his great hero."—*Temple Bible,* Introduction to Esdras I and II, pp. xix and xx.

[10] "Familiar assumption has obscured to our minds the fact that most of the New Testament writings really come to us without a title-page, destitute of date or author's name, save such as late, ambiguous, and often contradictory tradition has supplied. Some lack beginning (Hebrews), or ending (Mark). The letters of Paul, fortunately, are carefully superscribed with the names of author and recipients; but without some idea of the circumstances of the correspondence on both sides, they will be scarcely better understood than the audible half of a telephone conversation; and Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, 1, 2, and 3 John are anonymous."—B. W. Bacon, *Introduction to the New Test.,* p. 2.

while to try to recall the circumstances under which he began to write.

I. THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

Next to Jesus the principal character that moves before us in the pages of the New Testament is the apostle Paul. Who was he? A brilliant young Jew, a native of Tarsus, a considerable city, in southeastern Asia Minor. His Jewish name was Saul, but its gentile equivalent or substitute was Paul.[11] It is not likely that he ever saw Jesus in the flesh. But he was in Jerusalem not long after the Crucifixion; and, being zealous for the traditions of his fathers, he joined his fellow-religionists in an energetic persecution of those who embraced the new "heresy."[12] In a short time—it may have been two or three years, and it may have been five or six[13]—

[11] See Acts xiii. 9, and Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*, pp. 81-83, for a reasonable explanation.

[12] Acts xxiv. 14, A. V.

[13] The following paragraph and table, from Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, will be of service to readers who may not have access either to this work or to the other references given:

"*Conclusion.*—This article may be concluded by a comparison of the dates here adopted (col. II) with schemes preferred by three representative writers—Harnack (col. I), who throws everything early; Lightfoot (col. IV), who throws all the latter part late; and Ramsay (col. III), who investigates independently, but is nearer to Lightfoot than to Harnack.

	H.		R.	L.
Crucifixion	29 or 30	29	30	[30]
St. Paul's conversion.....	30	35–36	33	34
First visit to Jerus.....	33	38	35–36	37
Second visit to Jerus.....	[44]	46	46	45
First Missionary Journey...	45	47	47	48

from the Master's death occurred the murder of Stephen. The witnesses to this crime "laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul" [14]—our Saul; who straightway obtained official sanction to continue the persecutions, and set out for Damascus on the terrible errand. While journeying thither he experienced a conversion which was the turning-point of his life. Upon arriving in Damascus he espoused the new faith, and publicly proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah.

Paul's life subsequent to his conversion lasted about thirty years—it is impossible to speak with precision, partly because we do not know the date of his death, and partly because the rest of the chronology has not been made out with certainty.[15] In a general way it may be said that his

	H.		R.	L.
Council at Jerus., 2d M. J..	47	49	50	51
Corinth reached late in.....	48	50	51	52
Fourth visit to Jerus., 3d M. J.	50	52	53	54
Ephesus left.....	53	55	56	57
Fifth visit to Jerus., arrest at Pentecost.....	54	56	57	58
Rome reached early in.....	57	59	60	61
Acts closes early in.....	59	61	62	63
St. Peter's martyrdom.....	64	64–65	80	64
St. Paul's martyrdom.....	64	64–65	65	67

Besides the above, see the "Table of Approximate Dates," from B. W. Bacon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, appended to this chapter.

[14] Acts vii. 58.

[15] The chronology of Paul's life is at present under fresh debate. Recent discussion tends to throw back the year of Jesus' death to 30 A. D., or even 29, and to put Paul's conversion at 32

public career divides itself roughly into three main periods: first, a preliminary period of fourteen or seventeen years (according to the reckoning which may be adopted), covering his retirement at first and his early labors in Syria and Cilicia; second, a missionary period of nine or ten years, comprising his extended journeys in Asia Minor and southeastern Europe; and third, a period of captivity, at Caesarea and Rome, occupying four years.

1. Concerning the first of these periods we learn most from Paul's own brief, retrospective account:

> But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me, even from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me: but I went into Arabia; and again I returned unto Damascus.
>
> Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Peter,[16] and tarried with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, except James the Lord's brother. Now touching the

or 33 (as some say), or at 35 or 37 (as others hold). See article "Chronology," sections 64-80, in *Encyclopedia Biblica*, Vol. I; *"Chronology of the New Testament"* in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I; Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, chronological table; B. W. Bacon's *The Story of St. Paul*, p. 88 ("Paul's conversion was certainly not later than 36, when Caiaphas was deposed, and probably was several years earlier"). Ramsay says the conversion was in 33, and may have been in 32; and McGiffert says, 31 or 32.

[16] This is understood by Bacon to mean that Paul went to learn Peter's story of the life and work of Jesus. See *The Story of St. Paul*, p. 53.

things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not. Then I came into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they only heard say, He that once persecuted us now preacheth the faith of which he once made havoc; and they glorified God in me.

Then after the space of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus also with me.[17]

Thus the apostle rapidly sketches the events of these early, formative years; and not much information can be gleaned from other sources to help us fill in the outline with details. We have no letters from him which date from this period.[18]

2. It was in the second or missionary period that Paul's literary activity commenced, so far as his preserved writings enable us to judge. In this period were produced his principal letters, namely: Thessalonians, Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. The genuineness of II Thessalonians is disputed, and, as already stated, the chronology is somewhat uncertain; but, allowing for differences of opinion respecting these points and also respecting the date and place of Galatians,

[17] Gal. i. 15–24.

[18] For more complete information see Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul;* O. Cone's *Paul: the Man, Missionary, and Teacher;* Lyman Abbott's *Life and Letters of Paul;* McGiffert's *Apostolic Age;* Ramsay's *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen;* Bacon's *The Story of St. Paul,* more recent than any of the above.

we may recall the circumstances under which the documents just named were produced.

Paul made three missionary journeys. On the first of these, in about the year 47, he set out from Antioch, Syria, in company with Barnabas and John Mark, the latter's nephew, for a visit to Cyprus, the native home of Barnabas. After a tour of the island, in the course of which they met with a signal success, at Paphos, in the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul or governor of Cyprus, they sailed thence to the southern coast of Asia Minor. Stopping at Perga, in Pamphylia, they next visited such places as Antioch in Pisidia, Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium in South Galatia; then, returning through Pamphylia to the seaport town of Attalia, they sailed back home to Antioch in Syria. This first journey seems to have occupied between one and two years.[19] Quickly following it trouble arose in the form of bitter opposition from the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who sought to undo Paul's work among the churches which he had just established. To counteract this antagonistic influence and to recover his converts from a reactionary tendency, the apostle soon wrote his letter to the Galatians[20]

[19] Ramsay thinks it "began in March, 47, and ended about July or August, 49."—*St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen*, p. 128.

[20] Authorities differ regarding the date and place of this. McGiffert thinks it was written from Antioch, very shortly after the return from this first journey. See his *The Apostolic Age*.

—that is, to the churches that he had so recently founded in the above-named cities of the southern part of the Province of Galatia.

Within a few months Paul undertook his second missionary journey. Passing rapidly through Asia Minor to the northwest, he at length reached Troas, whence he felt himself summoned to go over into Europe; for the great longing of his heart to carry the gospel to the gentiles steadily increased, and the vision of the Græco-Roman world won to Christ, and to the worship of the God and Father whom Christ had revealed, became his growing inspiration. So, crossing the Ægean Sea, he began at once to preach in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berœa, meeting with gratifying success along with many difficulties; and soon he went on southward to Athens and Corinth. While at Corinth he learned that some of his teachings at Thessalonica had been misunderstood by the friends there, who were anxious over certain matters; and to explain these things to them and to counsel them in love, as was his wont, he wrote his First Letter to the Thessalonians, perhaps in the early summer of 50. This letter did not fully accomplish its purpose, and was soon followed by at least a part of our present

pp. 226 f. B. W. Bacon assigns this letter to Corinth, a year or two later. See his *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 280. Both consider this as Paul's first letter. For different opinions, consult the other references given above. Ramsay (*op. cit.* p. 192) assigns this letter to A. D. 53.

Second Letter to the Thessalonians. If, as held by some, Galatians was written at this same place (Corinth) and at about the same time, or a little earlier, its purpose was, as stated above, to protest against the Judaizing influence of Paul's enemies and against the backsliding of his Galatian converts.

These three letters, then, are the earliest Christian writings that we have. They were undoubtedly read in the assemblies of the churches to which they were addressed, and probably more than once. They were cherished alike for the instruction which they contained and for the loving appeals which they made; and they were all the more valuable inasmuch as there were no other Christian documents then in circulation. The story of the gospel had been repeated orally, and was spreading far and wide; but the written narrative of Christ's life and teaching was not yet in existence, and our present four gospels came a generation later.

Within a year or two Paul returned from Corinth to Jerusalem and Antioch, and then started on his third missionary journey. Again passing through Asia Minor, and preaching in the western "Povince of Asia," he took up his abode for two or three years in Ephesus. From this place he wrote his Letters to the Corinthians, about 53 or 54; although a portion of II Corinthians may have been written a little later, from Macedonia.

Subsequently Paul visited Corinth a second time, and while there, perhaps early in 55, wrote his Letter to the Romans, one of the longest and strongest of his productions. His missionary tours were now over. Soon he left Corinth, and shortly sailed from Philippi for Jerusalem, where he was arrested and taken a prisoner to Cæsarea.

Now from this brief sketch we plainly see how the first Christian writings came into existence. They sprang out of the earnest life-work of the Apostle to the gentiles, to whom Christendom is immeasurably indebted; they were issued as a perfectly natural means of instruction and exhortation to meet the peculiar exigencies of the time; and their great author never dreamed that they would circulate throughout the world two thousand years later, and be almost worshiped by the followers of Jesus Christ, for it is certain that he did not expect the world to stand two thousand years, or even a hundred years: he expected rather a speedy personal return of the Savior, with a simultaneous cataclysm in the realm of nature, accompanied by the resurrection of those that had "fallen asleep," the "change" of them that "remained," and the miraculous inauguration thus of the kingdom of God.[21]

3. The third period of Paul's ministry succeeding his final visit to Jerusalem, and including his detention at Cæsarea and his imprisonment at

[21] See I Thess. iv. 13–18; I Cor. xv. 50–54.

Rome, gave rise to a second group of letters, called "Epistles of the Captivity," from their frequent mention of his "bonds" and of himself as the "prisoner of the Lord." These are the short letters known as Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.[22] Concerning at least two of these, Ephesians and Colossians, there has been much dispute whether Paul was really their author, or to what extent they emanated from him; and likewise there have been different opinions regarding the localities from which and the dates at which the several letters in the group were written.[23] However these open questions may be answered, we may see, if we grant only that the documents contain largely a genuine Pauline element, that, like the former group, they sprang out of the great apostle's life of labor and thought. They were born in the soul of a profound spiritual thinker and a devoted Christian toiler. Behind them there stands a living, ardent human friend and counselor; in them there are dominant certain central, sublime ideas, held with the strength and joy with which any thoughtful man grasps a grand and vital truth; and through them throbs the spirit of a noble love, an unshaken faith, and a victorious hope, which only a great

[22] It is held by some that the historical order is probably Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, and Philippians.

[23] Professor Bacon, whose treatment commends itself for its freshness, insight, and thoroughness, holds that all four are Paul's, and were written from Rome in 58, 59, 60. *See Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 280.

and good man could cherish. Thus the human element in them is perfectly real and perfectly natural; time and circumstance have left their indelible impress upon them; and there is no more mystery about their origin than there is about the ultimate source of any other form of exalted thought, unselfish love, and high devotion. One of the most inspiring spectacles in this world is that of a great soul absolutely consecrated to truth, righteousness, liberty, and love. Paul was such a one; and out of his brave life-work, led and blessed of God, came those glowing letters which have given spiritual light and warmth to all succeeding generations.

Because it is not necessary to the main purpose of this chapter to take up all the books of the New Testament, the remaining epistles, as well as Acts and Revelation, are passed by, and the most important works in the whole Bible will now claim our attention. Yet the consideration of them must be brief and suggestive, while for a more extended discussion of the many points of interest which they present the reader must look to Introductions, Lives of Christ, and kindred books.

II. THE GOSPELS

The four gospels are said to be "according to" Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, respectively.

This phrase does not necessarily mean that four persons bearing these names actually wrote these documents as they now stand, although such has been the general belief. It has been further supposed that the first and last of these writers, that is, Matthew and John, were eye-and ear-witnesses of what Jesus did and said, and made record as such; and that all the evangelists have presented in these four gospels a substantially harmonious and particularly trustworthy account of the Master's life and work. In what respects the new or critical view modifies this conception will be indicated by a general, though partial, statement of the situation.

The attentive reader cannot fail to observe that these four writings are very similar, and yet very different. They all report some of the same things, sometimes in the same words, and at other times in different words; and yet each contains some things that the others omit, and omits some that the others contain. Especially is the Fourth Gospel noticeably unlike the others, in its style, in its spirit, and largely in its subject-matter. In its literary form and structure it seems more continuous than the other three, as if it were more nearly the work of a single person; and while it records fewer outward events in the life of Jesus, it gives us at much greater length certain of his purported utterances in the form of conversational discourses. Besides, it is introduced with a Logos-

doctrine not found in the other narratives, and throughout it employs the phrase "Son of God" in speaking of Christ, while they almost (not quite) invariably use "Son of Man." [24]

Now how are these similarities and differences to be explained?[25] Modern scholars answer by saying that the first three gospels are a compilation—that is to say, are composite in structure, somewhat like the Hexateuch—while the Fourth Gospel is mainly, if not entirely, the work of a single author; and, moreover, that the said compilation was made, or begun, under the peculiar conditions of Palestinian or Jewish Christianity (particularly in the case of Matthew), while the other production (the Fourth Gospel) originated amid essentially foreign and Hellenic surroundings, in Ephesus or elsewhere. The more one considers the facts and arguments adduced in support of this general position, the stronger it appears to be. Let us look at it somewhat closely.

[24] For more explicit descriptions of the peculiarities of this gospel, see Cone's *Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity*, chap. vii; Bennett and Adeney's *Biblical Introduction;* also Adeney's *How to Read the Bible*, p. 105; and Bacon's *New Testament Introduction*. The literature on this special topic is very extensive. See references given in these works.

[25] Professor Bacon shows the reality and proportions of these similarities and differences thus: "If we represent by one hundred the entire contents of all four (gospels), the following table will exhibit the relation: Mark has 7 peculiarities, and 93 coincidences; Matthew has 42 peculiarities, and 58 coincidences; Luke has 59 peculiarities, and 41 coincidences; John has 92 peculiarities, and 8 coincidences."—*New Test. Introduction*, p. 176.

After the death of Jesus his followers had no immediate occasion for writing anything about him. They met often to comfort and encourage one another, and they preached to their fellowmen the gospel which they had learned from him —telling the story of his life, and repeating his cherished sayings. He had spoken, not in the Greek language, but in the Aramaic; and his utterances were undoubtedly first written down in this native dialect. At the outset they were rehearsed orally, as was the custom among the Jews in disseminating the instruction of teachers. It was not until the gospel began to spread abroad among the gentiles, through the work of Paul and others, that the necessity arose for translating the Master's words into Greek. This was doubtless a gradual process, which took place variously in different Christian centers.[26] In the very beginning—perhaps for the first twenty years, from 30 to 50 A. D.—not very much of the gospel story and teaching was committed to writing. But as the Christian movement grew, the facts and truths were needed for the edification of converts, and the living apostles could not be everywhere to be appealed to. Their personal testimony was the supreme authority while they lived. By and by, however, they began to "fall asleep,"

[26] For a concise and illuminating account of this process and its conditions, see the article "Sermon on the Mount," by Clyde W. Votaw in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, Extra volume.

the expected "second coming" was not realized, and probably some perversions of the Master's utterances were early current; and these various circumstances led his friends to make some authentic record concerning him. At any rate, it is highly probable that certain of his sayings were committed to writing within a generation after his death, or even a shorter time; and some written memoranda of his career began to supplement the oral tradition reciting the story of his life and teaching. It is generally agreed, or at least it is a well-grounded opinion, that two of these primary documents constituted an important contribution to our first two gospels, namely, the *Logia* or *Sayings* or *Words* of Christ, written by Matthew; and the *Memorabilia of Events in the Life of Jesus,* said to have been taken down from the preaching of Peter by Mark. It is thought that the latter of these writings formed the basis of our "Gospel according to St. Mark," which was the earliest of the four canonical narratives to be composed; and that the *Logia,* by Matthew, furnished the basis of our first gospel, and was supplemented by the substance of Mark's work. Further, it is thought that the "Gospel according to Luke" was written with all these various oral and written sources of information, with perhaps still others, before its author. Finally, it is supposed that all three of these gospels passed through the hands of editors or redactors who gave the finish-

ing touches to their composition.[27] Their precise dates cannot be determined, but the latest of the three, Luke, is believed to have been completed not far from 90 A. D.[28] But of course it should be remembered that a specific date like this indicates the practical finishing of the work as we now have it, and *not* the production of the written "sources" which entered into its final composition. It is altogether likely that some of these "sources" originated as early as 62–66 A. D.; so that the narrative sketch given in Mark, which is substantially incorporated in both Matthew and Luke, and also the Logia which formed the basis of Matthew may be held with entire good reason to have been written not later than the sixth decade of the first century—that is, within the period of a generation from the Master's death.

If the foregoing account is approximately correct, even though simple and very meager, we can

[27] For an excellent treatment of this whole subject, with a valuable conspectus of present opinion, see Bennett and Adeney's *Biblical Introduction*, pp. 275–327. See also Cone's *Gospel Criticism*, and Bacon's *Introduction to the New Test.*; Burton, *Short Introduction to the Gospels*; Robinson, *The Study of the Gospels*.

[28] The impossibility of exactly fixing the dates, and the consequent variety of judgment among critics may be seen from the following assignments by different scholars, as given by President George L. Cary in his volume on the *The Synoptic Gospels* (Putnams, 1900): Matthew: 66–70, 70, 70–73, 70–75, 85, 96, 130–140; Mark: 64–67, 65–70, 65–85, 70–80, 76, 100, 120; Luke: 78–93, 80–95, 80–105, 95, 110, 120.

Professor Bacon, whose studies are recent and thorough, gives the following as his own conclusion, in a "Table of Approximate Dates": Mark, Rome, 75–80; Matthew, Jerusalem (?) 80–90; Luke-Acts, Antioch (?) 85–95.

see that, in the language of Professor George T. Ladd,[29] these gospels are "the result of a previous process of preaching, writing, hearing, and reflecting; and they are dependent upon each other, and upon common oral and written sources, to a degree which it is difficult to determine." And I may add that each appears to be an honest attempt to set forth such views of the life and teaching of Christ as the author believed to be true. There is no evidence of fraud or conspiracy on the part of these sincere and earnest narrators; and the very discrepancies of their respective works, as well as the different ways in which they use the same materials, prove them to have been actuated by upright and loving motives, and so enable us to draw near to the majestic Figure whose dignity and beauty emerge from their fragmentary records, even as a photograph develops under the liquids, lights and shades which the artist employs.

The Fourth Gospel stands by itself, and the debate regarding its date and authorship is not yet closed. The traditional view has been that it was written by John, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, in his advanced age, toward the close of the first century, probably in the city of Ephesus. On the other hand it has been held to be an alien and late production—the work of one not familiar with Palestine and Judaism to so great an extent

[29] *What is the Bible?* p. 322.

as an intimate companion of Christ must have been, and to date from the second half of the second century. Recent discussion, however, has compelled a retreat to *at least* the early part of the second century, by showing that this gospel, as well as the Synoptics, was known to Tatian, if not to his teacher Justin Martyr, both of whom were flourishing by the middle of the second century. The late Professor Ezra Abbot, one of the ablest New Testament scholars whom this country has ever produced, was a stout champion of the Johannine authorship of this work; and many are ready to claim that, since the publication of his monograph in 1880, there is no longer much question about the matter. But a large number of scarcely less able scholars continue to take the opposite side, in spite of his cogent argument. Manifestly it is a problem which the unlearned cannot solve. For my own part it is difficult to believe that John, the son of Zebedee, could have written so profound, so philosophical, so spiritual a gospel; yet I can *conceive* that, residing a long time in Ephesus, where the Logos-doctrine was deeply rooted and vigorous,[31] he *might* have been so influenced by this form of teaching as to have experienced a gradual and complete transformation of his intellectual conceptions, and *might* have harmonized his Christian faith with his Greek speculation after the manner of the Fourth

[31] See James Drummond's *Via, Veritas, Vita,* pp. 297 f.

Gospel. (I am reminded here of a radical and profound change which Dr. James Martineau, himself an opponent of John's authorship of this book, tells us, in the preface to one of his latest works, took place in his own mind when, toward the middle of his life, he went for a time to reside and study in Europe.) [31] There is nothing impossible in supposing that John may have been affected by Greek thought enough to color his whole Christology. Besides, his personal experience, long and deep—in which meditation, memory, disillusionment, and devout love all had their work—may have been sufficient to give the writing that highly subjective, reflective, interpretative character which it possesses. Yet these considerations are not decisive, and the question is still an open one. A view lately advocated with ability, by Wendt, Briggs, and others, is that the gospel as we now have it is a composite work—that is to say, that the substance of the teaching which it contains is from John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," while the literary form is from another hand, which added some materials not derived from the information furnished by the aged apostle.[32]

[31] See *Types of Ethical Theory*, Vol. I.

[32] "The Johannine problem" is perhaps the most mooted and difficult in the entire domain of Higher Criticism. The dicussion is between masters on both sides. Recently two weighty contributions to the conservative argument have been made by Principal James Drummond in *The Character and Authorship of the Fourth*

Such is a glimpse, yet merely a glimpse, of the way in which our four gospels came into existence—by a process of accretion that was peculiarly vital, personal, and complex.

Gospel (1903), and by Professor William Sanday in *The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel* (1905). On the other hand, Professor B. W. Bacon has presented a strong case for a very different view in a series of articles in the *Hibbert Journal* for April, 1903, January, 1904, and January, 1905. A fair statement of the two positions may be seen in the subjoined quotations.

Dr. Drummond says in his conclusion: "We have now gone carefully through the arguments against the reputed authorship of the Gospel, and on the whole have found them wanting. Several appear to be quite destitute of weight; others present some difficulty; one or two occasion real perplexity. But difficulties are not proofs, and we have always to consider whether greater difficulty is not involved in rejecting a proposition than in accepting it. This seems to me to be the case in the present instance. The external evidence (be it said with due respect for the Alogi) is all on one side, and for my part I cannot easily repel its force. A considerable mass of internal evidence is in harmony with the external. A number of the difficulties which have been pressed against the conclusion thus indicated melt away on nearer examination, and those which remain are not sufficient to weigh down the balance. In literary questions we cannot look for demonstration, and where opinion is so much divided we must feel some uncertainty in our conclusions; but on weighing the arguments for and against to the best of my power, I must give my own judgment in favor of the Johannine authorship."

Professor Bacon says, in his *Introduction to the New Testament* (1902), pp. 251 ff.: "The Fourth Gospel is the effort of a gifted mind, schooled in Phrygo Alexandrian mysticism and divinely exalted in the conscious apprehension of the mystery of the faith, to ground the higher Christology of Paul in an interpretation, based on partly independent sources, of the ministry and teaching of Jesus. . . . . Criticism . . . . tends today to admit, as the historical element of the Gospel, trustworthy data and genuine *logia*, resting on the authority of the son of Zebedee, but is more convinced than ever of the need for discrimination, recognizing that the data have been mingled with less trustworthy material and wholly recast, the *logia* expanded into dialectic discourses, and the work as a whole adapted to the author's purpose of theological exposition and interpretation, in a manner wholly incompatible with the clear, historical recollection of an eye-witness."

What now shall we say about the historical value of these precious books? Are they true, accurate, precise, and reliable sources of information concerning Jesus Christ and his followers? They are sources of information, but they are not to be regarded as exact histories—indeed, they plainly show that they were written in any but a spirit of scientific exactness or correctness. They bear nowhere the marks of precise and infallible statement; they are loose, fragmentary, composite accounts, honestly and lovingly written, of what was currently known and believed regarding Jesus of Nazareth by the two generations immediately succeeding him; but it does not follow that every item contained in them was strictly true, even though the writers supposed it so; and it is perfectly plain to me that many wonder-stories about him must have grown up and become intertwined with the narrative of real fact and truth, which show at once the credulity of the age, the profound impression of Jesus' life and character, and the devotion and love of the disciples who cherished his precious name and teachings. Nevertheless they tell us enough about him to enable us to gain a clear and trustworthy conception of his beautiful life, his heavenly spirit, and his pure, simple, blessed gospel. Though we cannot believe that he actually said and did everything attributed to him in these memoirs, we can believe in *him* more strongly than ever—in his historical reality,

in his lofty thought, in his mighty power, in his sweet, gentle, unselfish, holy character; and this, after all, is the essence and substance of all real and true faith in Christ.[33]

III. DISTINCT TYPES OF CHRISTIANITY

In concluding this chapter some attention must be given to another important aspect of the new view of the New Testament, consisting of the distinct types of Christianity which it discovers within its pages. For not all the books comprised in this collection of sacred writings afford us either the same conception of Jesus Christ, or the same body of doctrines; and very much in all of them is quite different from the Master's own simple, spiritual teaching. As briefly as possible, and in a general way only, the broad characteristics of the several principal types may be here indicated, in their probable historical order.

1. The writings of the apostle Paul give us the earliest interpretation of the gospel, dating from the first generation after the Master's death, or from the period 47–60 A. D. They show us Jesus, not only as the Jewish Messiah, but as the

[33] "In the midst of all the chaotic elements which the flood of oral tradition rolled along is clearly discernible an historical grouping of salient facts—the appearance of the Baptist, the Galilean ministry of Jesus, the healings, the teachings, the travels with the disciples, the gatherings of multitudes, the conflicts, Cæsarea Philippi, the fateful journey to Jerusalem, Gethsemane, the trial and the tragedy, the consternation of the little flock, and the mysterious birth of a great hope."—Dr. Orello Cone, *Gospel Criticism and Historical Christianity* (Putnams, 1891), p. 324.

Christ for all the world—a spiritualized Messiah, lifted out of and above all national or earthly limitations; who in his death on the cross somehow satisfied the claims of the Jewish law and forever cancelled all obligation thereto on the part of mankind; who therefore broke down all middle walls of partition between Jews and gentiles; and who opened a new dispensation of heavenly truth and grace, spiritual and free, for the whole human family. There is thus in these writings the first distinct note of universality for Christianity, and to their great author, more than to all the other apostles, are we indebted for its world-wide mission. It is impossible to state Paul's full thought about Jesus and his work in a few words. Let it suffice, for the present purpose, merely to say that he conceived Christ to be the Head of a new spiritual order in the world, a "Second Adam," the medium of God's gift of the Spirit to mankind, imparting eternal (that is, spiritual) life to all who by faith embrace him. He is thus the "mediator between God and man," who must reign until all enemies are put under his feet, abolishing even death itself. As such a mediatorial regent, he is to return to earth shortly, when a resurrection of "the dead in Christ" shall take place, together with a transformation of the living believers, each of whom "shall be changed" and be given "a spiritual body" "like unto his own glorious body;" and "God shall be all in all."

Of the wonderful influence of this Pauline presentation of the gospel, not only upon the early Church but upon the whole Church in all the centuries—making for spirituality, vitality, liberty, evangelistic zeal, a sublime and serene faith, a victorious courage and joy—there is no room here to speak. Happy the man who truly understands Paul! One need not entirely think the apostle's thought in order to appreciate the nobility of his character and the salutariness of his great work. At any rate it is essential that one should clearly perceive his distinctive position if he is to know the New Testament as it really is.

2. Passing over some slight modifications of the Pauline view, contained in such writings as the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians; and not stopping to try to state the peculiarities of the teachings of I Peter, James, Jude, the Revelation, and II Peter, we may notice next, among the principal types of Christianity to be distinguished in the literature of the New Testament, that of the Letter to the Hebrews, whose author is unknown. This book gives us a picture of Christ as a superhuman and pre-existent being—a Son of God, "appointed heir of all things," through whom the worlds were made, the brightness of the divine glory, the express image of the Divine Person, and upholding all things by the word of his power; but made for a little while lower than the angels, thus condescending to be born into our

human world, partaking of flesh and blood so as to identify himself with humanity, being tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin, and becoming perfect through suffering; ordained to be a Great High Priest, sacrificing his body, once for all, for the sins of mankind, and entering into the holy place in the heavens, where he intercedes with God for men; and who, by means of this whole experience, tasted death for every man, destroying him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and so delivering them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. His chief function, thus begun on earth and continued in heaven, is to open a life of holiness to the children of men through the sufficient atonement which he makes for their transgressions, and through the assurance which he gives them of a "rest" that they may enter into if they do not "draw back unto perdition." This letter is believed to date from about 75–85 A. D.

3. In the Synoptic Gospels we find the next leading interpretation of the life and teaching of the Master, emboding a type of Christianity quite distinct from those above indicated. These gospels, as we have seen, gradually took shape and are not to be assigned to precise dates. They clearly reflect, however, the facts and views which became well established and widely circulated in the generation immediately following Paul's

death—that is to say, in the period 60–90 A. D. In the main the Synoptics present us with Jesus as the true Jewish Messiah, spoken of nearly always as "the Son of Man," whose Hebrew lineage is traced, and who came to "fulfil the Law and the Prophets." This is more especially the emphatic note in Matthew, which is pronouncedly Jewish as compared with Luke. In all three gospels the crucifixion appears to be unexpected, even by Jesus himself at first, and unto the very last by his disciples; and consequently the resurrection came to them (notwithstanding his warnings and promises) as a great surprise, marvelously attesting him as the Anointed One, indeed. Thereupon he became the glorified Messiah, the Redeemer of Israel, in a grander sense than any had ever dreamed; and his speedy return "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" was thenceforth eagerly awaited. There is little in these gospels to necessitate any other than a humanitarian view of the nature of Jesus, although the supernatural element pervades them in the form of God's miraculous providence.

4. The Johannine type of Christianity, expressed in the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles of John, exhibits Jesus as the pre-existent "Son of God," the divine Logos, descending from heaven to earth to reveal the Supreme Father. Being "from above" while his associates are "from beneath," he moves among men as a superhuman

personality, having a mysterious power over earthly conditions. Yet his humanity is emphasized in the fact that "the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He came to be "the light of the world," redeeming his followers from "darkness" and giving them "the light of life"—giving "eternal life" to all who should believe on him. He came in love to disclose the infinite love of God, and to establish love as the ruling force in human hearts, overcoming sin and filling society with the beauty and joy of holy love. At last, through his death and resurrection, he returned to the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, and promised to send the Comforter to lead his disciples into all truth, peace, and divine fellowship. The conception and treatment are exalted, profound, and spiritual in the highest degree, and the Fourth Gospel has been well called "The Heart of Christ."[34]

Now it is plain that what we have in these several instances is, not merely statements of the facts in the life and teaching of Jesus, but also *theories* of his place in the spiritual economy of God. The respective writers not only report, but they also interpret, explain, philosophize, as best they can, for the benefit of their readers; that is

[34] The title of a noble volume by the late E. H. Sears.

to say, they *construe* the wonderful life-story with all the knowledge, faith, hope, and love which they possess; and the very fact that they do this, however differently, attests the remarkable impression which the character of Jesus made upon his friends.

It is also plain that these various theories can not be exactly harmonized, and that we should no longer try to harmonize them under the notion that all parts of the New Testament must be expected to tell one and the same story, to teach one and the same doctrine. Rather we must seek to go behind each writer's interpretation, and look at the facts for ourselves, and put our own construction upon them in the light of the largest knowledge and the most spiritual insight of our own time. Then we shall quickly discover that, through all readings and misreadings, the great Master inevitably makes his own powerful impression upon us, and that, within the drapery with which human thought and affection have clothed him, he stands commanding and supreme in his moral and religious genius. Because of the grandeur of his personality, and because all the writings of the New Testament relate to him, we may say that the several types of Christianity distinguished in its pages do, after all, like commingling lights in a sanctuary, blend more or less perfectly in their influence on our minds and hearts as they are suffused by the radiance and beauty of his own pure character and spirit.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

NOTE.—Two references may be given for a more extended study of the subject considered in the closing paragraphs of this chapter; namely, Dr. Orello Cone, *The Gospel and Its Earliest Interpretations* (Putnams, 1893); and Professor George H. Gilbert, *The First Interpreters of Jesus* (Macmillan, 1901).

NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

TABLE OF APPROXIMATE DATES[1]

	A. D.
Galatians, Corinth	Spring of 50
I and II Thessalonians	Spring and Summer of 50
II Cor. 6:14—7:1 and I Cor., Ephesus	Winter of 53–54
II Cor. 10:1–13:10, Ephesus	Summer of 54
Fragments of Pastoral Epistles, Troas (?)	Autumn of 54
II Cor., Macedonia	Autumn of 54
Rom., Corinth	February, 55
Rom. 16:1–23, to Ephesus, from Corinth	February, 55
Eph., Col., and Phil., Rome	58–59
Phil. and II Tim. (additions excepted), Rome	60
Hebrews	75–85
I Pet., Rome	75–85
James, Rome (?)	85–90
Jude, Proconsular Asia (?)	85–90
II Pet.	100–150
Mark, Rome	75–80
Matt., Jerusalem (?)	85–90
Luke–Acts, Antioch (?)	85–90
Revelation, Ephesus	95
I, II, and III John, Ephesus	95–100
John, Ephesus	100–110

[1] From Professor B. W. Bacon's *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 280 (copyright, Macmillan, 1902); by the courteous permission of the publisher.

CHAPTER VI

THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

The facts and views presented in the preceding pages compel a restatement of doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Bible. The traditional thought on this subject does not afford an adequate explanation of the wonderful variety of phenomena now brought before us, just as the Ptolemaic astronomy would be too small to fit the enlarged heavens observed by Kepler, Newton, and Newcomb. We require a more ample conception of the nature and the method of inspiration than that which has prevailed heretofore—one more comprehensive, flexible, natural, and vital, covering a wider range of facts, and implying deeper processes of the Divine Spirit in our human world. In order to attain, if possible, to such a better conception, it is desirable to recall the customary ideas, to indicate their sources, to show their insufficiency, and then to suggest a few considerations which may form at least the outline of a more satisfactory view.

I. As was stated in the second chapter, the vast majority of Protestant Christians until lately have believed the Bible to have been peculiarly and completely inspired; that is to say, they have thought it, in a unique sense, the direct gift of God and absolutely infallible. They have deemed

it wholly free from error and fault, whether of scientific or historical fact, or of moral precept and example; they have regarded it as "the Word of God" throughout, and have held that a denial of any portion of it was an invalidation of the whole, while an acceptance of any portion was an acknowledgment of its entire accuracy and binding force. This notion was expressed by Theodore Parker, in his day, for the purpose of refutation, as follows:

> The Bible is a miraculous collection of miraculous books; every word it contains was written by a miraculous inspiration from God, which was so full, complete, and infallible that the authors delivered the truth and nothing but the truth; that the Bible contains no false statement of doctrine or fact, but sets forth all religious and moral truth which man needs, or which it is possible for him to attain, and no particle of error:—that therefore *the Bible is the only authoritative rule of faith and practice.* To doubt this is reckoned a dangerous error, if not an unpardonable sin.

Of course, since Mr. Parker's time, some modifications of this view have been brought about, especially among those familiar with the methods and results of modern biblical criticism; but essentially it still obtains among the masses in nearly all sections of Evangelical Protestantism. It is only in recent years and in limited circles that this conception of the Bible in general, and of its inspiration in particular, has begun to lose its former power.

The view is, indeed, an ancient one, if not

taken too narrowly. In its main features it prevailed among the Jews of Christ's time and earlier (as respects the Old Testament); while, concerning both Testaments, numerous expressions occur in the writings of the Christian Fathers, both Greek and Latin, which may be held to support it. From Justin Martyr, Origen, Eusebius, Tertullian, Jerome, Augustine, and from Schoolmen and Reformers, may be cited passages setting forth opinions of Scripture so exalted as to justify the belief, looking at these alone, that they entertained the current Protestant idea of the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible. Nevertheless, a fair construction of their various utterances shows that they wrote, not in exact language, but uncritically and even loosely, and merely recorded their general impression of the spiritual power and the practical value of the Bible as a whole. Certainly the exegetical treatment accorded the Scriptures by St. Jerome, for example, in which he speaks in quite disparaging terms of St. Paul's style, does not comport very well with that idea of inspiration which regards the entire Bible as divinely given, pure, and inerrant.[1] A similar remark is applicable to Luther's familiar allusion to the Epistle of James as "an epistle of straw," and to many of his expositions of Scripture, as well as to his customary exaltation of faith and the Spirit above the Bible not less than the Church.

[1] See Farrar's *History of Interpretation*, p. 230.

Much the same thing may be said of the opinions of Calvin and Zwingli, and still more of the leaders who breathed the freer air of England.

II. While the generic idea of inspiration is an ancient one, by no means confined to the Israelitish people, and while the remote sources of the doctrine of biblical inspiration just mentioned are to be found as far back as the age of the Old Testament prophets;[2] while, too, as remarked above, the essence of the doctrine prevailed in the last two centuries before Christ and in the early centuries of our era, yet the doctrine did not assume its rigid, dogmatic form, both extreme and imperative, until after the Protestant Reformation. Then, through the exigencies of the situation—the rejection of papal authority, the necessity thence arising of having some other court of final appeal, and the lack of learning among the leaders of public thought—resort was naturally had to the Bible, and erroneous ideas concerning it grew up and became fixed, which is not surprising in view of the ignorance of the Scriptures prevailing among the masses. Says the learned Rev. Dr. Tholuck, of the German Lutheran Church:

> In this manner arose, amongst both Lutheran and Reformed divines, not earlier, strictly speaking, than the seventeenth century, those sentiments concerning Holy Scripture which regarded it as the infallible production

[2] An excellent discussion of the whole subject is to be found in the Bampton Lectures for 1893, by Professor William Sanday, published in a volume entitled *Inspiration* (Longmans, Green & Co.).

of the Divine Spirit, not merely in its *religious,* but in its *entire* contents; and not merely in its *contents,* but also in its very *form.* In both Protestant churches (the Lutheran and the Reformed) it was taught that the writers of the Bible were to be regarded as writing-pens wielded by the hand of God, and amanuenses of the Holy Spirit who dictated, whom God uses as the flute-player does his instrument; not only the *sense,* but also the *words,* and not these merely, but even the *letters,* and the *vowel-points,* which in Hebrew are written under the consonants—according to some, the very *punctuation*—proceeded from the Spirit of God.

And he concludes a careful historical review by saying further, that

the assumption of an inspiration extending to the entire contents, to the *subject-matter* and *form* of the sacred writings, has so little claim to the honor of being the only orthodox doctrine, that it has only been the opinion of, comparatively speaking, a very small fraction.[3]

To the same effect writes Archdeacon Farrar in his scholarly and very valuable *History of Interpretation*:

It is easy to see how the doctrine arose. Papal infallibility had been set aside. In the perplexity of opinions men yearned to substitute some objective authority in the place of it, and so to acquire, or to imagine that there could exist, respecting every conceivable detail of theological speculation, a certitude which, as regards such details, is nothing but an idle dream. The Reformed and Lutheran Churches having gained—often by heroic struggle and through seas of blood—the undisturbed possession, not only of certain Christian verities, but also each of its own special theories; and, being compelled

[3] Noyes' *Essays,* p. 66 (American Unitarian Association, 1860). The entire essay *The Doctrine of Inspiration,* by Professor F. A. D. Tholuck, is a valuable historical contribution, as well as an argument for a more liberal view.

to maintain this heritage of opinion against Anabaptists, against Socinians, against Romanists, wanted something to which they could appeal as a decisive oracle. They made the Holy Scriptures such an oracle, but they made the oracle answer them according to their own idols. They substituted for its interpretation their own ready-made theology. They assumed that the Bible formed a homogeneous, self-interpreting, and verbally dictated whole, and that the inferences drawn from it by dialectics and compacted into a technical system were as certain and as sacred as itself. In this way a difference of exegetical opinion became, not only an intellectual error, but a civil crime. Step by step we mark the full imposition of this dogma. It was not itself discussed. There was no attempt to place it on a scientific basis. It was an *a priori* assumption which was pushed into the utmost extreme of unreasonable fanaticism. . . . . It was based, not on exact principles, but on vague assertions which floated in the air. The great Reformers, as we have seen, never attempted to bind themselves by the only consequences of such a doctrine. They used current phrases, but practically they left themselves a wide liberty to criticise, not only the separate utterances of individual writers, but even the very composition of the canon. They preferred to be inconsequent rather than to be fettered, and gave to Faith an authority co-ordinate with that of Scripture. But their successors regarded Faith as the *exclusive* product of Scripture, and dependent for its authority on Scripture only. They turned the inspiration-dogma into "an iron formula, a painful juridical fetter of conscience to be imposed on Christians to the detriment of fresh religious life and the destruction of the just appreciation of the Bible." [4]

III. Seeing, then, that this doctrine is not, in the largest sense, historically orthodox, even though certain aspects of it have always pre-

[4] See pp. 371, 372.

vailed, a presentation of some arguments against it may be the more boldly made.

1. First to be mentioned among these is the fact that there is so little positive argument for it. As ex-President John Bascom says:

> Its proof is null; it is a pure invention in the face of obvious facts. . . . . No doctrine could be more in contradiction of the general providence and government of God than this of final, exact, sufficient, verbal truth. None springs from a more complete misunderstanding of rational life and religious sentiment, and none, therefore, could offer itself to our faith burdened with heavier presumptions against it.[8]

2. It involves an undisguised distrust of the human mind and a depreciation of the religious instincts of the human heart. One reason why it is maintained is the fear that, if it were given up, there would be no end to the skepticism and infidelity ensuing. It has been supposed that the whole superstructure of Christianity might totter if it were ever admitted that there are any serious discrepancies, inaccuracies, mistakes, untruths, or immoralities in the Scriptures—that everything must be definitely and positively settled, or men would not know what to believe regarding Holy Writ, and would discard religion entirely. In other words, if the fence should be let down at a single point, the sheep would immediately leave the green, fertile pastures, and rush out into the arid wastes of the desert, to be destroyed or to

[8] *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 272 (Putnam's, 1876).

perish with hunger! This is the reason of expediency—the reason which, at different times, has led the Christian Church to oppose the doctrine of the earth's rotundity, the Copernican system of astronomy, the teachings of modern geology, and the theory of evolution; it has been imagined that, if the customary view were abandoned, God would be driven out of human life, the whole established order of things would crumble into dust, and people would run wild intellectually and religiously. As if the Almighty had no more secure tenure in this world or in the hearts of his children! It is good to be able to believe that religion is too vital and permanent a reality to be so easily overthrown; and we may well heed the remark of one of the writers already quoted, that "the Christian who can feel his faith certain and out of danger only in a diplomatic attestation *from without*, can find peace only by repairing to the (so-called) infallible Roman pontiff." [6]

3. Again, the inequalities of the Bible are inconsistent with the mechanical theory of inspiration here repudiated. Can anyone read the genealogical lists of the books of Numbers, Chronicles, Nehemiah, and elsewhere in the Bible, or read many of the ceremonial laws recorded in Leviticus, or read the book of Ecclesiastes, or the Song of Songs, or the Revelation, and say that they impress him as being of equal value, author-

[6] Dr. F. A. D. Tholuck, Noyes' *Essays*, as before, p. 92.

ity, purity, beauty, sublimity, or excellence in any other respect, with the wise words of Moses, the impassioned utterances of Isaiah, the fine, poetic reasoning of Job, the sweet and tender piety of the trustful psalms, the eloquent and practical appeals of St. Paul, the deep-hearted meditations and counsels of the loving John, or the spiritually divine, life-giving sayings of the Son of Man? The truth is that there is the greatest variety in the quality of the Sacred Writings, not only as to their literary style, but as to their quickening and nourishing power; and it can scarcely be doubted that the inculcation of the doctrine in question is largely responsible for the lack of intelligent discrimination regarding this variety in the reading of the Scriptures by the common people.

4. Further, the undeniable existence of disagreements, mistakes, and errors in the Bible, many of which refuse to be reconciled, would appear to be a conclusive proof of a larger human factor in its production than would be compatible with the theory of its plenary inspiration and infallibility. The erroneous quotations from the Old Testament in the New, which are sometimes wrongly credited—as, for instance, Matt. xxvii. 9, where a prophecy that was delivered by Zechariah is referred to Jeremiah; a circumstance which Calvin acknowledged his inability to explain, saying, "I confess I do not know, nor am I anxious about the matter;" which are sometimes

materially altered, sometimes taken from the inaccurate Septuagint, and sometimes evidently made from memory without respect to exactness and precision—these constitute one class of cases in point. Another class consists of discrepancies between the historians of both Testaments, as between the Kings and the Chronicles, or as between the gospels; for example, the different wordings of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew and Luke, the different genealogies of Jesus given in these two works, the different accounts of the movements of his parents after his birth, and the different statements about his reappearance after his resurrection, not to mention the more serious discrepancies between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. Then there is the unscientific story of creation in the first chapters of Genesis, which no scholar can accept as exactly true, even when applying poetic license to expand the six creative days into six vast cycles of time (and what right has one to use poetic license with the Bible, if it is such a book as this theory propounds?); there are the deeds and precepts, the examples and teachings, set forth in the Old Testament, which no true-hearted man can sanction —for instance, the merciless slaughter of men, women, and children, as well as domestic animals, by the Israelites in the conquest of Canaan, or in their feuds with the Philistines, of which we read in Joshua, Judges, and Samuel, and which are

there approved; there are also the sins of David and Solomon, the skeptical expressions of the book of Ecclesiastes, and the vindictive curses of the imprecatory psalms—all these facts demonstrate the fallible, imperfect, human character of many portions of these writings, and render untenable the doctrine of inspiration here controverted. These facts are easily enough accounted for by another view of inspiration, presently to be stated, which makes room for the great principle of development in the life of the Hebrew people, finding natural expression in the literature which reflects the spiritual progress of the nation; but the traditional, mechanical theory of inspiration, recognizing no such principle, overlooks all such progress, and reduces the rich variety of this literature to a dead level of sameness.

5. Finally, if the Bible were miraculously *written,* that is, completely inspired of God and made infallible, it would be necessary that it should be miraculously *preserved, translated,* and *interpreted,* in order to be kept free from error and misunderstanding; and this would involve an endless succession of inspired human agents and teachers. The gist of this truth has always been insisted on by the Roman Catholic Church, and recognized by not a few other authorities. At any rate it is hard to see how one who claims infallibility for the Bible can gainsay the like claim put forth for the great Church that has so steadfastly

made it. If one must lean upon a staff in order to walk, there is small choice between a crutch and a crook.

The argument against this conception might be closed by showing how it robs the Bible of its true glory; how it lies across the path of Christian progress as a serious obstacle; and how it hangs like a leaden weight on the wings of the free, spiritual, vital gospel of Jesus Christ. But there is room only for a brief quotation from Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

> Let me once be persuaded that all these heart-awakening utterances of human hearts—of men of like faculties and passions with myself, mourning, rejoicing, suffering, triumphing—are but as a Divina Commedia of a superhuman—O, bear with me if I say—Ventriloquist; that the royal Harper to whom I have so often submitted myself as a *many-stringed instrument* for his fire-tipped fingers to traverse, while every several nerve of emotion, passion, thought, that thinks the flesh and blood of our common humanity responded to the touch—that *the sweet Psalmist of Israel* was himself as mere an instrument as his harp an *automaton*—poet, mourner, suppliant, all is gone; all sympathy at least, and all example. I listen in awe and fear, but likewise in perplexity and confusion of spirit.[7]

In conclusion, the words of Archdeacon Farrar may be profitably heeded:

> Whoever was the first dogmatist to make the terms "the Bible" and "the Word of God" synonymous, rendered to the cause of truth and of religion an immense disservice. The phrase in that sense has no shadow of scriptural authority. It occurs from three to four hun-

[7] Noyes' *Essays* (1860), p. 99.

dred times in the Old Testament, and about a hundred times in the New; and in not one of all those instances is it applied to the Scriptures. . . . . The formula of the Reformation in its best days, like that of the Church of England, was not, "Scripture *is* the Word of God," but, "Scripture *contains* the Word of God." [8]

IV. Rejecting, then, this theory of the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Bible as erroneous and unwarrantable, and as a burden upon the spiritual life of the Christian Church, what have we left and what position shall we take? The answer is at hand, clear, positive, and cogent.

Let us begin by saying that the Bible is to be regarded as *literature* first of all; for the various writings of which it is composed are *literary productions* before they can be anything else to us. If we ask what kind of literature, the answer is that it is *religious* literature, pervaded by a religious spirit, full of religious ideas, thoughts, convictions, and principles; regarding and treating nearly all its subjects from a religious standpoint; that is, as related to the existence, providence, and government of God. If we ask, moreover, how this literature came to be so intensely religious, the answer is that its *authors* were strongly religious men; that is to say, were possessed, influenced, dominated by a deep and powerful religious spirit, which made it as natural for them to write in a religious vein as it is for a true poet to write poetry or a true singer to make music. Still

[8] *History of Interpretation*, p. 369.

further, if we ask how those authors came to be so profoundly and keenly religious, the answer again is, that the *race* to which they belonged, that is, the Hebrew, a branch of the Semitic, was pre-eminently characterized by the depth and strength of its religious life, by its development of an earnest sense of a moral order in the universe, so that the religious ideas, convictions, and spirit, as well as the ethical ideals, cherished by the representative men in Israel were more or less the common property or quality of all the members of the nation. And now if we ask how that race, particularly the Israelitish portion of it, came to be so very religious, the answer may be unhesitatingly given by saying that *God made them religious,* partly in that general way in which he has made all men religious by nature, and partly in that special or peculiar way in which, through a long educative and disciplinary providence, he trained and fitted them, developed and quickened them, to perceive and understand spiritual truth. This position, when clearly apprehended, will be seen to be susceptible of natural, easy, and satisfactory establishment.

1. For, in the first place, we cannot doubt that all men are naturally religious. The universality and the spontaneity of the religious sentiment, expressing itself in all manner of temples, shrines, ceremonies of worship, creeds, doctrines, and devotions, are a sufficient *outward* proof of

this; and the consciousness of a worshipful frame of mind, a native sense of reverence, a feeling of dependence and awe, an upward-looking and yearning spirit, is the *inner* complement of this evidence to attest the depth, strength, and naturalness of the religious instinct in the human soul.[9] Hence we may say that the Israelites, like all other men, were religious by nature, just as surely as they were rational and affectionate by nature.

2. We may hold that the providence of God concerned them, as it concerns all men everywhere. It compassed them as a nation and as individuals; or, rather, the interests of both were at once subserved by that perfectly wise and beneficent government which was exercised over them and is exercised just as really and plainly over us. That government may not have been special and particular in the sense that it was unusual and irregular—certainly we are not to think that it was intermittent or capricious. We must conceive that the ends which the Almighty contemplates for men and nations are sought and gained, in the main if not entirely, by the perfect working of those general and blessed laws which he has ordained for all his children, and which operate with impartiality and inexorableness everywhere. Yet we are never to forget that our God is an immanent God, indwelling in humanity—"one God

[9] See Dr. Daniel G. Brinton's *Religions of Primitive Peoples* (1898), chap. i; also Selleck's *The Spiritual Outlook* (1902), pp. 137 ff.

and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in all." [10] Therefore we can never limit the power of the Divine Factor in human life. Because God is not outside of the world alone, but within it, we may be sure that he is its animating and guiding Spirit far more frequently and to a vaster extent than we may ever perceive. For this reason we may often comfort ourselves by saying of our own city and country, as well as of Jerusalem and Judea, "God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." [11] And so we are to believe that he was the ruling and directing Presence in the hearts of the children of Israel long ago, and slowly wrought out his own great purposes in the complex affairs of their national life. If there is warrant for believing that in the drift, tendencies, events, and developments of our time, here in America, in Great Britain, in Germany, in Italy, in Russia, in the Far East, God is the Supreme Providence, working out through good and ill his wise and gracious plans, whose remote and stupendous issues we can but dimly apprehend; there is warrant for thinking likewise of ancient Rome, Greece, and Israel; in each case, the divine endowment of faculty to serve the divine purpose, being somewhat different from that of others, and in the case of Israel being specially and preeminently religious.

[10] Eph. iv. 6.

[11] Ps. xlvi. 5.

3. This conception grows upon us when we look more closely at the history of the nation. Remember the humble condition from which the people rose—a rude, nomadic life at first, and then a period of slavery in Egypt. Consider the character of the country in which they settled—Canaan—with the mountains on the north, the desert on the east and south, and the Mediterranean on the west, shutting them in from surrounding tribes, and helping them to develop a strongly marked individuality. Reflect how, under these circumstances, their peculiar religious ideas, particularly their monotheistic faith, gradually intensified and at length became all-dominant. Bear in mind the moral and spiritual influence of their wisest, purest teachers, appearing in every generation to exalt their ideals, to reprove their waywardness, to urge upon them the divine behests of their holy faith. Estimate thus the place and service of that unique and remarkable class of men, the prophets, who labored to guide the nation in the ways of righteousness, which are the ways of a deepening and broadening religiousness. Then measure the significance of the nation's contact with the great powers, Syria, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, and Persia; how it tried, tested, and disciplined the proud, suffering children of Abraham; how it broadened their outlook upon the world; how it strengthened their ethical and religious passion, when, in their adversity, Jehovah

was their only Refuge and Solace; how, too, it both corrupted and enriched their traditional faith; and how the Nation was born a Church in the throes of these varied experiences. When all these facts and features are duly studied, we clearly see that the result which was at last produced was inevitable—the development, out of such racial material of an increasingly distinct and profound type of moral-religious life. Finally, let it be said again that, supplementing these varied processes of education and discipline running through the ages, we are to remember the constant, in-dwelling power of God—that God himself touched the hearts of the people, stirred within them, penetrated their consciences, prompted them to one course of action or another, swayed, guided, *inspired* them, working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure. Surely all this seems reasonable to be believed of the immanent and infinite Spirit, and is the very soul of that vast movement out of which came, in the course of centuries, the full-grown religion of the Israelitish people.

4. Now, out of the abundance of this religious life, so characteristic of the nation, that literature, those utterances and writings, of which our Bible is the garnered remains, sprang forth, just as all literature is produced, with all its human imperfections, limitations, errors, but full of the deep, earnest, holy thought and spirit which gave it its

priceless value. And so the Bible today is simply the literary deposit of that full tide of religious life which laved the shores of Israel two thousand and more years ago—that life which was fed and led and blessed of God; which was developed under his providence through many centuries; and which gave birth at last to the great Teacher for whom the ages had toiled and waited, the Son of Man, the Revealer of the Father, the Prince of Peace, from whom the whole world may receive Israel's best and highest gift, increased and made divinely beautiful by his own deep, pure, unerring insight into the things of the spiritual life.

This view of inspiration is natural, simple, rational, and vital; accounting for all the errors in the Bible, and for all its glorious truths; sparing us the necessity of apologizing for anything; saving us from those violent distortions of language, those far-fetched explanations, that unscientific exegesis, which, if not amounting to actual prevarication, do at least sap one's intellectual integrity; and giving to us that freedom of contemplation and study in which are life, strength, growth, and joy.

In conclusion a little space may be taken for pointing out some of the specific benefits which may be expected to accrue from an adoption of the foregoing conception.

1. It will have the effect to transfer the basis

of religion from the Scriptures to the human soul; to make men see that religion is a greater fact than the Bible; to show them that religion is not the product of Scripture, but Scripture is a product of religion; to exhibit religion as a natural, deathless reality, as deep as the human heart and as eternal as the grace of God; to teach men that the natural is more wonderful than the miraculous; and, above all, to bring God out of the remote past, into the living present, and near to the soul of his every child, opening the way of spiritual approach and communion without the intervention of a sacred book.

2. It will take the wind out of the sails of that arrant skepticism which has spread itself and flourished by virtue of its assaults on the misunderstood Bible. The doctrine which this chapter has antagonized invites such assaults; and, now that the science of historical and biblical criticism and the progress of the physical sciences have put into the hands of its enemies so many weapons, they are able to use them with very destructive effect. But when a more natural and rational conception shall be inculcated, which shall regard the Bible, not as a single, homogeneous work, not as a textbook of science or of systematic ethics, not as claiming for itself any infallibility; but as a mass of literature whose language is fluid, free, various, like all living language, not to be interpreted in a hard-and-fast literalism, but rather in

accordance with a true literary instinct—when some such position as this shall be taken, it will effectually spike all the guns of that skepticism which has flaunted its banners over its great victories in discovering "the mistakes of Moses!"[12]

3. Another effect, scarcely less important, will be to free the Bible from that arbitrary usage to which, unfortunately, it has been too often subject. Those familiar with the vagaries and eccentricities of scriptural exegesis, from the rise of Rabbinism among the Jews and of Allegorism among the early Christians down to the Millenialism and the Christian Science of our own time, will see the significance of this advantage.[13] By false methods of interpretation, or the absence of all method, the Bible has been made to teach almost every conceivable doctrine, and to support many a terrible wickedness[14]—slavery, polygamy, and the subjection of woman; and the tap-root of all these erroneous teachings, darkening counsels, and unholy sanctions has been the idea of the plenary inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. When this idea shall fade out of the popular mind, being replaced by the more valid conception here-

[12] The title of one of the late Colonel Ingersoll's popular works.

[13] Again let the reader consult Farrar's *History of Interpretation*, first and second chapters.

[14] "In religion
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?"
—Shakespeare.

in advocated, some of the perversions and absurdities of religious doctrine will pass away which have claimed, and still claim, their tens of thousands of adherents; some hoary superstitions and cruelties which have darkened our world will disappear; and opportunity will be afforded for the upspringing of a fairer, more beneficent type of religion and civilization.

4. The remark just made leads us a step further. Perhaps the most valuable result of all will be to place the emphasis in our religious teaching and work, not upon the letter which killeth, but upon the spirit which giveth life. The great essence and priceless excellence of the Bible is its spirituality, its intense, living, palpitating, mighty, ethical and religious energy. It is this that makes it breathe, and makes *us* breathe, if we let it. And surely it is this vital and vitalizing spirituality that we need in our religion today, to feed the hearts of men and wake the music of a new, divine life within them. "God is Spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth." Our churches contain too many dead, perfunctory formalists, narrow dogmatists, hollow traditionalists, dry rationalists, mechanical revivalists; all "having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." What they all need, and what alone can lift them out of the slough, is the quickening of a living spirituality by the Great Spirit that

speaks through the Bible and in many other ways. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God"— the most real and certain testimony we can have. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God;" and "he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man."

Now the Lord is that Spirit, and "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." "Everyone that is born of the spirit" is like "the wind, which bloweth where it listeth," that is to say, is not confined, subject to human control or limitation, whose life is not bottled up in a sacred book any more than in a sacred church, thence to be drawn forth and inhaled upon the prescription of some theological doctor. The man whose religion is real and true is he whose soul is alive and throbbing with God's own spirit; and this kind of religion is not wholly dependent upon any creed or church or set of sacred writings, although it may be vastly helped and nourished thereby.

There have been three great periods in the history of the Bible when Paul's assertion that "the letter killeth" has been abundantly verified; namely, that of the strict constructionists of the Judaism of the last few centuries before Christ; that of the hair-splitting Scholastics of the Middle Ages; and that of the narrow Protestant dogmatists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Let us hope that the time has now come when

"the spirit that maketh alive" is rising, like a mighty tide, in our churches, bringing liberty, light, and divine power upon the bosom of its sparkling waters, flowing in from the boundless ocean of the Infinite Love. If such shall prove to be the case, we shall find that the free, spiritual religion thus prevailing will both promote and be promoted by the vital conception of inspiration above sketched. Moreover, we shall find that this type of religion and this conception of inspiration make room for the progress of biblical scholarship, and cannot be disturbed by the most thorough research or discussion. For the only essential question involved in the whole problem of the origin and character of the Bible is identical with the one great, essential question involved in the life of the world today, namely, the question of an in-dwelling Divine Power; and the more traces of the presence and operations of this Power which may be discovered in any race or age, the broader and more solid will be the foundation upon which the Christian spiritualist can erect the temple of his faith, hope, and love.

CHAPTER VII

THE DIVINE REVELATION IN THE BIBLE

The new learning regarding the Bible calls, not only for a restatement of the doctrine of inspiration, but also for a reconsideration of the kindred question of revelation. In what sense is it true that "the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind"?[1] If the Bible is "the Word of God," or "contains God's true Word," how does that "Word" express the Divine Mind, and how does such an expression differ from the disclosures afforded by "the Book of Nature"? This is a question with which any valid, critical treatment of the Bible must deal seriously.

The answer hitherto given to this question has been definite, positive, precise; but it no longer satisfies because it is now seen to be too simple, naïve, childlike. In ancient times, when the gods were thought to be more numerous, nearer to the earth, and more human than subsequently, and were supposed to participate in all important mundane affairs, it was easy to believe that they spoke directly with men. The history of antiquity is full of their imagined doings and sayings. The

[1] Winchester Profession of Faith, adopted 1803.

primitive Israelites, still polytheistic, shared the universal ideas in this respect; and when they developed at length a pure monotheism, they retained, if they did not even increase, their conviction that Jehovah their God not only ruled "in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," but also communicated his messages and mandates to whomsoever he would. Knowing nothing of secondary causes, the Almighty was the immediate cause of every significant occurrence: it was he that hardened Pharaoh's heart, he that turned the tide of battle, he that raised up and threw down potentate and priest; likewise it was he who prompted and imparted the utterance of lawgiver and prophet, wise teacher and psalmist. God, to the Hebrew, was "in His world," as well as above it, not exactly in the same sense, and yet as really and vividly as to us—perhaps even more so; and "the Lord said," or "the Lord spake unto me, saying," were expressions more frequent and natural than they can possibly be to our modern thought.

In view of this general attitude of mind, it is easy to understand how the writers and speakers in the Old Testament era should have believed very sincerely in a divine inspiration and revelation; and likewise how, in the later centuries of Judaism, when their deliverances were gathered up and canonized, "the Scriptures" should have been regarded as the direct gift of God, holy and

flawless. Speaking of the various titles by which these "Scriptures" were designated at about the time of Christ, Professor W. Sanday says:

> It is common to all these titles that they indicate a Divine origin. And this is a point which may be illustrated with overwhelming abundance. There can be no doubt that it was a rooted idea among the Jews of the first century, both Hellenistic and Palestinian, that the Scriptures of the Old Testament came from God. Philo expresses this in the most uncompromising manner.[2]

Professor Sanday further shows that Josephus and the Jewish doctors had precisely the same view as to the divine source of these Scriptures, and that the New Testament reflects it also in its allusions to the Old Testament. And when, in the course of the first four Christian centuries, the New Testament writings came to be put upon an equality with the Old, it was inevitable that the same general conception of their supernatural character should attach to them—indeed, this was the very reason for their canonization as "Scripture."

Now this ancient and traditional conception, inhering somewhat in the Bible itself, and reaching us unquestioned, in the main, until the rise of the present critical era, has educated popular Christian thought to consider both Testaments as a divine revelation in much the old primitive sense. Of course it has been modified more or less, but substantially it still prevails among the

[2] *Inspiration*, pp. 73 f.

Christian masses, and is fairly stated in this brief passage from a recent book:

> According to it [popular theology], it would seem as if there existed before the foundation of the world a certain number of divine truths, all absolute, none relative. A page of these truths, so to speak, was given to Abraham, another to David, another to Hosea, another to Paul. The complete collection of these revelations constitutes the Bible. In accordance with such a view, revelation is always absolute, of equal value for all time.[3]

Deeming such a conception mechanical, and not in harmony with what we know to be the natural workings of the human mind; deeming it also inconsistent with a true view of the Scriptures as literature, because tending to obliterate all traces of variety in them, we must seek to formulate a better conception of revelation, more justly explaining the ways in which the Bible may be said to disclose the Divine Mind to mankind.

1. Let us start with the fundamental thought that, if the universe is really divine, its divineness may be expected to manifest itself somehow to spiritual beings capable of apprehending divine truth. This ought to be obvious without much argument. If a world is orderly and rational, its order and rationality must be discernible by denizens having a natural sense of order and endowed with reason. If the planets are actually governed by mathematical laws, those laws must be cogniz-

[3] Burton and Mathews, *Principles and Ideals for the Sunday School* (University of Chicago Press), p. 41.

able, in part at least, by beings possessing a mathematical cast of mind; and the point is that such beings do not read their mathematics into the firmament, but rather merely discover the mathematical principles already established there. Sir Isaac Newton did not create gravitation; it was a pre-existent reality, and he at length perceived it. So we may say of beauty; the artist does not put it into the landscape, but recognizes it when he finds it already there. So we may say of goodness and love in human life; wherever they really exist, they manifest themselves soon or late to other good and loving hearts. It all resolves itself into a question of *reality*. The primary ground of any knowledge on the part of man is the assumption that knowledge is possible, that is to say, that the universe is intelligible, that reality can be apprehended. If, then, the universe is divine as well as intelligible, that is, if it is spiritual, having a spiritual order and spiritual meanings, its spirituality may be expected to manifest itself, sometime and in some degree, to spiritual beings inhabiting it.[4]

a) Man is such a spiritual being. He thinks, feels, wills, knows; conscious intelligence is the highest form of knowledge which he experiences; and consciousness testifies daily to his spiritual nature, while such testimony is corroborated by

[4] A friend adds: "The recognition of any quality implies the community of both recognizer and recognized in that quality. If no divineness in man, he could recognize divineness nowhere."

all the observations and tests which he can make in the lives of his fellow-men. If he can be sure of anything in this world, he is sure that he is a spiritual being by nature. This is an ultimate postulate of thought; he can neither flout it nor go beyond it.

b) As such a spiritual being, man finds traces, hints, indications of an existing divineness in the universe. He does not make them or read them into the universe, any more than the sensitive beholder makes or puts into the cathedral the solemnity which so quickly impresses him as he enters the sacred building. The beholder finds the solemnity because it is both *there* and in himself, and because *he is therefore able to recognize it.* So man as a spiritual being perceives a divine character upon the face of the universe because it is *there* and because there is such divineness in him that *he is able to recognize it there.* If any given person should deny its existence, he would only confess his inability to perceive it, as a man color-blind might deny the beauty of a rose.

c) Thus detecting, here and there, hints and fragments of an existing divineness, man is forever trying to interpret them, trying to read the strange language (yet not wholly strange) written all over the earth and sky. He is like Champollion, who patiently deciphered the trilingual inscription of the Rosetta stone, in the early part of the nineteenth century; or like the host of

scholars who have been translating the cuneiform writings on the clay tablets of ancient Assyria and Babylon; only that the hieroglyphs in which the Divine Mind has written the story of eternal wisdom, goodness, and love in the Book of Nature, in human history, and in the inner experience of the individual heart are a *living language,* as fresh and inspiring today as "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

d) Spelling out a few words of this divine language, or a few sentences of this divine story, man becomes increasingly convinced that there are larger, deeper, higher meanings yet to be apprehended than he has ever dreamed of; that he has scarcely learned the alphabet of this marvelous medium by which the spiritual element in his own soul may enter into the spiritual treasures of the universe; and that he has only to press on, in patience and love, to discover vaster, more beautiful, more benevolent purposes and methods in the divine constitution and order of the world than eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. And so, with growing assurance and joy, he says with Browning —

> This world's no blot for us
> Nor blank; it means intensely, and means good:
> To find its meaning is my meat and drink.

e) But one more thought must be borne in mind in this connection, namely, that man is lim-

ited in his discernment of the divine meaning of the universe by his own limited capacity. You can get no more out of a foreign language than you are able to read; you can get no more out of an opera than you can understand and appreciate; and if in either of these cases you get nothing, the fault is not in the language or the opera, but in yourself. How much of man's thought, love, learning, plans, and purposes can be apprehended by the domestic animals? A little bit, we are sure; yet how *very* little! Going a step higher, let us consider how meagerly a child may grasp its father's knowledge, intentions, hopes, or even affections; or a pupil his teacher's learning; or a half-civilized negro the culture of an Emerson or a Curtis; or a coarse, wicked sensualist the exalted, pure, unselfish, spiritual insight and idealism of the Christian saint. In each instance the limitation lies upon the inferior soul—his eyes are holden, that he cannot see. So every man's apprehension of the divine significance and glory of the universe is inevitably and inexorably limited by the limitations of his own spiritual capacity. He can have as much sunshine as he can take and enjoy; as much truth as he can understand; as much goodness and love as he can appropriate and appreciate; as much of the Divine Life as his own life can contain and manifest.

2. Now we are prepared to see how God may be reasonably supposed to be seeking to disclose

himself to his spiritual children. Not only are *they* forever seeking to apprehend more and more of the divine meaning which flits before them and invites their reocgnition; but *he* who put the meaning there, and is himself its Source and End and Explanation, is likewise seeking to *tell* them as much of himself as they can understand. At least this is a familiar and congenial thought to the Christian. If we are warranted in conceiving of God as "a Divine Mind and Will ruling the universe, and holding moral relations with mankind," [5] it is easy to think of him as perpetually expressing himself in and through the government which he thus maintains, thereby putting himself in the way of being apprehended by those of his finite creatures who have acquired sufficient intelligence to recognize some traces of his indwelling existence. If we go a step further and characterize God as paternal, we must see that his love for his children is only another name for an infinite yearning for recognition and communion—a yearning that is immeasurably deeper and purer in him than it can be in us, and that constantly broods over us and solicits our answering knowledge and love. Even as the parents and teachers of Helen Keller strove, with an ineffable affection and patience, to make some sign by which she should understand their love and their thought, in other words, sought earnestly

[5] Dr. James Martineau's expression.

to *communicate* with her; so may we believe that God—so *must* we believe, if he is to us the God and Father of Jesus Christ—is continually *seeking* to make known his thought, goodness, and loving-purposes to us, his earthly, spiritual, shut-in children.

This waiting desire of God's universe to reveal its secrets to the human mind is well expressed in Mr. Lowell's lines —

> We trace the wisdom to the apple's fall,
> Not to the birth-throes of a mighty Truth
> Which, for long ages in blank Chaos dumb,
> Yet yearned to be incarnate, and had found
> At last a spirit meet to be the womb
> From which it might be born to bless mankind—
> Not to the soul of Newton, ripe with all
> The hoarded thoughtfulness of earnest years,
> And waiting but one ray of sunlight more
> To blossom fully.[6]

3. Granting so much, we have next to note how God makes use of the outward world to reveal somewhat of himself. On the field of the material realm, in the midst of which we dwell for a time, and to which we sustain relations of vital dependence, he displays, in infinite abundance and variety, evidences or expressions of his presence and character, which are to be learned by us. Like pupils entering the high school from the lower schools, and finding upon the walls of the new rooms maps, charts, diagrams, pictures, and quotations from foreign languages, all of which are

[6] *A Glance Behind the Curtain.*

strange and cannot be understood at first, but whose meaning will become known in the course of study; so we, pupils in the great school which is the world, are surrounded with wonderful symbols which convey some fragmentary message of the Divine Father's loving thought, or some reflection of his transcendent wisdom and glory, and these we are slowly to learn to interpret aright. Doing so, we pass "through nature to God" by "thinking God's thoughts after him."

If we ask *what* the outward world reveals of God or about him, the answer may be indicated, in part at least, by these words, namely: "Power," "order," "life," "wisdom," "goodness," "beauty." These terms which the human mind employs to designate what it perceives in the world are but so many names of the varied manifestations of that inscrutable Essence which the scientist calls the all-pervading Energy of the universe, which the mystic calls the immanent Spirit, and which the Bible calls the living God. The name is of slight consequence, the Reality is everything; and the Absolute Reality can be, at best, very imperfectly apprehended by us through the veil of material phenomena.

4. When, however, we press a little more closely and consider how God makes use of the human realm to reveal himself, we see all these manifestations taken up and carried to a higher stage, bringing us more nearly face to face with

the Eternal Father. For in this realm we find a new series of phenomena, denoted by such words as "intelligence," "will," "virtue," and "love." It is only in rudimentary form, if at all, that these qualities appear in the lower realm, the realm of nature; but here, in the higher realm, the human, spiritual realm, they are so abundant, so distinctive, and so exalted as to be dominantly characteristic; and along the loftier ranges of the human world, as exhibited in a Plato or a St. Paul or a Dr. Martineau, we find ourselves confronted by facts and forces wholly transcending the utmost reaches of the physical domain. In the presence of such ideas, thoughts, and garnered learning, such aspirations, affections, and fine discernments, such disinterested benevolence, such august sanctions, such holy passion as we witness in the great and good who have crowned our world with glory and honor, we read a new language telling a new story of the Indwelling Spirit that seeks by these additional signs to communicate with our minds and hearts. Thus do these spiritual traits, appearing in human life, indicate the Greater than these that is their Source; and thus "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." [7] As the products of man's creative genius—as in the case of the artist, the poet, the dramatist, the musician—prove the reality of his talent, and partly express his ideals and

[7] Rom. viii. 16.

his character, and yet do not exhaust his power, but rather increase it; so do these spiritual phenomena of the human world prove the existence of God, partially express his character and his disposition toward us, and yet leave his resources of wisdom and love unexhausted and infinite in their plenitude.

5. Now are we not ready to consider how God may employ races of men to express or reveal different phases of his thought, or to present different aspects of his educative, disciplinary providence? As a teacher in the school may use a certain class of pupils to show what may be accomplished in the study of language, and may use another class to show what may be accomplished in the study of music, and still another to show what may be done in drawing and painting; so the Great Teacher, Almighty God, may endow and inspire certain races of men in such ways as to enable them to show what may be achieved along lines of intellectual and æsthetic culture, or along lines of social organization and power, or along lines of moral and religious insight and influence. And in each of these cases the results wrought out may be justly held to indicate, not only what human nature is capable of, but also what is in the purpose of the Over-ruling Mind. As the workmen, skilled and unskilled, who are employed in the erection and adornment of a noble building, like a cathedral or the Library of Con-

gress in Washington, show not only what *they* can do, but reveal even more clearly the conception and will of the *architect* who designed and planned it all; so do the various peoples of the earth, in working out through the ages their natural tendencies and achievements, show, not only their own potentialities, but even more remarkably unfold and exhibit the beneficent thought and the stupendous plan of the Supreme Architect of the universe. Thus does human life, on a vast scale, in its slow, evolutionary development, reveal the wisdom and goodness of God; and with intelligence, as well as with reverence and gratitude, the devout heart may sing:

> He rules the world with truth and grace,
> And makes the nations prove
> The glories of His righteousness,
> And wonders of His love.

It is in the light of this large view of the subject that we are to interpret spiritually the mission of Greece, to show the world the excellence of knowledge and beauty; of Rome, to show the excellence of social order; of Israel, to show the excellence of morality and religion; and of them all to "declare the glory of God" and to work out his vast designs for the ultimate blessing of the whole family of mankind.

Considering the case of Israel particularly, we see how striking and significant are the facts. Although we may reasonably hold that all men are

by nature moral and religious beings, it was given to the Hebrew people to exhibit these traits in an exceptional degree. With them the ethical instinct became at length a passion for righteousness, and the religious sentiment became a fervent spirit of holiness, trust, and love that survived all "shocks of doom." Beyond any other people known to history, they felt the presence of God and the moral character of his government of the world. To say that he impressed himself and his justice and goodness upon them, more deeply than upon others, is but to claim that he was active in this part of his world in peculiar or special ways. —as, indeed, he is active in other realms and in different individuals in yet other peculiar ways. Genius is wonderfully diversified; no two poets or musicians are exactly alike; and why should any two races be identical in their apprehension and experience of divine truth. One flower differs from another flower, even as "one star differeth from another star in glory;" but all flowers and all stars reveal the beauty and wisdom which the Creator has embodied in these forms of material nature. So does the Hebrew race, in its historical development, apprehend and therefore unfold or disclose the higher aspects of moral and religious truth, what it means to feel the power of righteousness and the presence of God. To that race as a whole, and to many an individual member of it, the Great Spirit, the living God, seemed

more real and potent, more august and holy, more merciful and paternal than to any other people in all the world. It is not too much to say that he drew especially nigh to them, impressed himself especially upon them, and so moved or wrought within them as to make them singularly aware of the divine and holy character of the life to which they were prompted to aspire. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord," and the Lord lights it! "There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth him understanding"—gives him insight, apprehension, appreciation. How this is done we cannot tell, any more than we can tell how it is given to the poet to sing his songs, or the philosopher to grasp the profoundest truth, or the mother-heart to love and to know by loving what is pure and good. The mystery of mysteries is the in-dwelling of the divine in the human: how, then, shall we attempt to define it? We touch the border of the infinite life, and we understand and explain only as we learn by experience. But assuredly every heart that has thus learned to feel and know the presence and power of God, however imperfectly, can easily believe that he may have manifested himself to seers and prophets in the olden time with exceptional potency and fulness, and that he may have so wrought upon and within the Israelitish people as to justify the psalmist's remark, "He hath not dealt so with any nation."

It is this providential dealing with the Hebrews, as a whole, this progressive experience which they had in moral and religious ways, this growing apprehension on their part of the divine meaning of conduct, of human existence, of the worlds and the ages—it is this, taken largely, that constitutes God's revelation of himself to them; and out of all their experience, their thoughts and feelings, their mistakes and sins, they produced that wonderful literature which expresses their deepest life, and thereby expresses whatever measure of God's spirit and purpose he was able to put into them.

In what, then, does the substance or essence of the biblical revelation consist? In the words of another, "is it the history of the cosmos, the origin of man, the Israelites in the wilderness, the conquests of Joshua, the levitical priesthood, the exploits of Samson, the deeds of Saul? Does it forecast the future; tell of a kingdom that shall pass away, of a deliverer that shall come? Does it announce the end of the world, a final judgment, an ultimate salvation and reprobation? Do we read it literally in the texts of Judges and Isaiah and Ezekiel, in the genealogies of Matthew and Luke, in the colloquy of Mary and Elizabeth, in the rhapsody of Zacharias, in the arguments of Paul, in the visions of the Apocalypse?" [8] Such has been the common belief. But a better concep-

[8] A. W. Jackson, *James Martineau*, pp. 259, 260.

tion is that which is at once more simple and more comprehensive; namely that the substance or essence of the revelation lying back of the Bible and contained in it is *the self-disclosure of God to the spiritual consciousness of man*—the self-disclosure of God in his moral character and as a gracious Providence; a disclosure made in a marked degree to the Hebrew people because they were remarkably qualified to receive it; a disclosure, nevertheless, which, in some degree, is made to all his earthly children. As Dr. Martineau finely says, this

> self-disclosure of God to the human spirit . . . . carries in it the consciousness of a present Infinite and Eternal, behind and above as well as within all the changes of the finite world. It brings us into contact with a Will beyond the visible order of the universe, of a Law other than the experienced consecution of phenomena, of a Spirit transcending all spirits, yet communing with them in pleadings silently understood. But it recites no history; it utters no sibylline oracles; it paints no ultramundane scenes; it heralds neither woes nor triumphs of "the latter days." [9]

If we recognize this great central truth as the very heart of the biblical revelation—God's impression of himself, in his moral character and as a gracious Providence, upon the Hebrew people—we immediately find room for the principle of *development,* and can readily allow for all crudities and errors in the apprehension of divine truth on the part of the Israelites. That is to

[9] *Seat of Authority in Religion,* p. 311.

say, we see that the revelation was *progressive;* there was a progressive seeking after God by the most spiritual men of Israel; and there was a progressive intensifying of God's presence and power among them, and a progressive unfolding of his purposes regarding them and the world, from age to age. As we trace this spiritual evolution in the Bible, we see how the Hebrew race was led gradually from lower to higher ideas and ideals; how polytheism and anthropomorphism prevailed among them in the beginning; how at length monotheism triumphed, and Jehovah became spiritualized, and righteousness and mercy came to be more important than wars and sacrifices. So we behold, in the long history covered by the Old Testament, a grand moral and religious development which becomes an example and an interpretation of the religious evolution of the entire human family. In the light of it we see that what Israel learned of morality and religion, of God and his government, all men everywhere are in process of learning, more or less thoroughly, and always will be in some stage of that process; so that the Bible, which grew out of the ethical-religious experience of that particular race, in its particular historical setting, will always speak with some great measure of truth and power, to the hearts of all other men and women regarding divine things. Thus the God who drew nigh to Israel draws nigh to us and to all men in the in-

telligent, sympathetic reading of those ancient Scriptures which are the literary record of his providential dealings with that "peculiar people;" and the words of President Henry Churchill King are entirely justified:

> Here in the Old Testament we come into fellowship with the *real* God, who is the creator of the real world and acts in the real course of history. Not an imaginary God, a dream God, a God of mystic contemplation or of metaphysical speculation, but the real God of real life and history—Israel discerned. This is the glory of these books, and the secret of their sanity and permanence and power as well. To be quickened ourselves, therefore, by the faith and vision of God of these old prophetic spirits, whatever their limitations, and then to be able to see for ourselves in this history of Israel the presence of God, by his own revelation *in us*—this is the supreme office of the Old Testament. . . . . This is the self-evidence of the Old Testament—God speaking through it.[10]

It remains only to remark that the divine revelation in the Bible culminates in the character and teaching of Jesus Christ. What elsewhere is seed and root, in him becomes flower and fruit. In him are fulfilled "the Law and the Prophets," not, indeed, in any literal sense, but most sublimely in a vital and spiritual sense. In him were realized the purest longings of the best men of his own nation in its pathetic yet morally glorious history of nearly two thousand years. At the same time, although "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," he was singularly independent of race and country and

[10] *Reconstruction in Theology*, p. 149.

age in his thought and spirit. As Dr. Henry Van Dyke has well said:

> He was not a commentator on truths already revealed. He was a revealer of new truth. His teaching was not the exposition; it was the text. And this higher revelation not only fulfilled, but also surpassed, the old; replacing the temporal by the eternal, the figurative by the factual, the literal by the spiritual, the imperfect by the perfect. How often Jesus quoted from the Old Testament in order to show that it was already old and insufficient; that its forms of speech and rules of conduct were like the husk of the seed which must be shattered by the emergence of the living germ! His doctrine was in fact a moral and intellectual day-break for the world. He did far more than supply a novel system of conduction for an ancient light. He sent forth from himself a new illumination, transcending all that had gone before, as the sunrise overfloods the pale glimmering of the morning star set like a beacon of promise upon the coast of dawn. . . . . His teaching is neither ancient nor modern, neither deductive nor inductive, neither Jewish nor Greek. It is universal, enduring, valid for all minds and all times. There are no more difficulties in the way of accepting it now than there were when it was first delivered. It fits the spiritual needs of the nineteenth, as closely as it fitted the spiritual needs of the first, century. It carries the same attractions, the same credentials in the Western Hemisphere as it carried in the Eastern. It stands out as clearly from all the later, as it did from all the earlier, philosophies. It finds the soul as inevitably today as it did at first.[11]

We see, then, that the divine revelation implicated in the Bible consists, not in any particular form of words, howsoever written or by whomsoever uttered, but rather in the record which it

[11] *The Gospel for an Age of Doubt*, pp. 191, 193.

presents of man's—specifically the Hebrew man's —spiritual experience in a growing apprehension of God's presence and power, of his moral character and gracious providence, culminating at last in a vision of his absolute paternity, as portrayed in the teaching of Jesus Christ; all of which means, on the other side, a constant seeking by the Eternal Spirit to break into the minds and hearts of his earthly children with the glorious light of his own ineffable truth and love, to prompt and guide them, to restrain and correct them, to discipline and develop them, and so to bring them to know and love and enjoy him, and then to make him known to other and more backward souls, among all the nations, throughout the ages, and in all the world! It is thus the revelation of God to man; the revelation of man to himself; and the revelation of the spiritual constitution, meaning and destiny of that cosmic process by which our humanity has come into existence, and by which also it will be ultimately "delivered out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."

CHAPTER VIII

THE MORAL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

In what sense and to what extent is the Bible authoritative in matters of faith and morals? This is the most vital question involved in these chapters. Indeed it is the one essential question lying at the heart of all the discussions of our time concerning the Scriptures. We may ascertain what the Bible is in its external history and its inner nature; we may give a reasonable account of its inspiration and the character of the revelation which it affords; and we may proceed to show its practical uses and value: but all this is merely relative and incidental to a true estimate of its authority. What every thoughtful person wants to know, and what current study is seeking to determine, is the sense in which and the extent to which the Bible solves the great problems of religion, life, and destiny; how far it tells us, and how far it is to be trusted in telling us, what religion really is, what and whence life is, whether and what God is, whether there is a future for the human soul and of what kind, together with the doctrines that must be believed and the practices that must be observed to insure our highest welfare. We are asking—thousands of honest and serious minds today are asking—Does the Bible

really solve these problems at all? If so, how and how far? And he who can answer this question wisely and justly will render one of the best possible services to his fellow-men in the present state of the world's thought and feeling.

Now it may seem presumptuous for me to attempt to answer so great and grave a question. But each man's best thought is his best contribution to the progress of the race; and therefore he should put it forth, modestly but earnestly, to be confirmed or corrected by the inevitable growth of knowledge. Nor can a conscientious religious teacher evade the duty of serious thought upon so sharp an issue as we are here to confront. If we are to keep a firm footing and a clear vision amid the changing faiths of our time, so that we may lead the perplexed and the skeptical to a new and more valid trust in the great spiritual verities, and may be able to appeal to the indifferent with an effectual persuasiveness in behalf of a noble religion, we cannot avoid the most searching inquiry into the very nature of the soul's best assurances respecting things divine. To fail at this point is to fail everywhere, soon or late. We must know what we believe and why we believe, if we are to help others to believe at all. The importance of the present subject lies in the fact that it touches the deep foundations of our Christian faith, hope, and love.

Evidently the first thing to be done is to as-

certain the meaning of this word *authority*. We want to know what we are talking about when we speak of the Bible or of any person as having authority. Therefore let us ask what this term really denotes.

Like most of our important words, this contains a variety of ideas. From among the six different shades of meaning given by the *Century Dictionary* I select, as concerning us, these three: First, power or admitted right to command or act; as the authority of parents over their children, the authority of an agent to act for his principal. Second, the power derived from opinion, respect, or long-established reputation; influence conveyed by character, office, station, mental superiority, and the like; as when we speak of the authority of a distinguished jurist or scientist or historian or physician, in his special line of thought and work. Third, that to which or one to whom an appeal or reference may be made in support of any opinion, action or course of conduct; as when we speak of the testimony of a witness or the weight of that testimony; the credibility or reliability of an historian; the importance of the judgment of a certain scholar; the value of the decision of a court. As examples illustrative of these various significations we may take such familiar instances as these: A shareholder in a stock company has been authorized, and therefore has authority, to vote for absent shareholders in

a business meeting; that is to say, power, consisting of liberty and right, has been given to him for this purpose. Again, an eminent specialist in the treatment of certain diseases is considered an authority in all such cases: that is, his opinions carry so great a weight as practically to settle the question for others. Once more, in matters of history we state certain things on the authority of ancient writers like Herodotus or Josephus or Eusebius or Plutarch; that is, these writers are our sources of information, and we take their word with whatever degree of confidence we repose in them, according as that confidence has been produced by acquaintance with their works and tests of their utterances.

Now we perceive running through all these different shades of meaning the one idea of power —power to rule or act, power to command respect and confidence, power to convince of truth; and therefore I think they all may be gathered up into one comprehensive definition by saying that *the word authority denotes power to influence the mind, in one way or another.* Especially is this the case when we speak of the Bible or of any personage in it as having authority: we mean that it or he has power to command our assent, our acceptance, our belief, our compliance. If we say that the Bible is an authority in religion, we mean that, in some way, it has power to form, sway, and guide our religious thought, feeling and conduct;

originating, it may be, or at any rate shaping, our beliefs respecting God, sin, retribution, salvation, right living, and final destiny.

But what is the precise nature of this power, and whence does it arise? Here we come to the parting of the ways, where we shall find two different conceptions producing two quite opposite attitudes.

1. There is the conception of authority in its objective aspect, as mainly an outward affair. For instance, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church claims for itself authority—that is, power; that is, liberty and right and ability—to determine what is true and obligatory in matters of faith and morals; and that authority is looked upon and heeded by every loyal communicant in the great ecclesiastical household as external in its nature, having been derived from the apostles who received it from Jesus Christ. This is the kind of authority that is possessed by every priest, bishop, or superior potentate in the Church of Rome, and to some extent in other churches; an authority *conferred* upon those receiving and exercising it, and *imposed* upon those who must obey it. It is essentially the same sort of authority as that which is possessed by the Czar of the Russias, or by any other political monarch—the authority of dictation. An example of it in the Bible may be found in the case of the Roman centurion who said to Jesus: "I am a man under authority, hav-

ing soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." [1] This is the kind of authority which is possessed by every officer in an army—the power to command and be obeyed.

Now those who ascribe this objective authority to the Bible necessarily conceive it in such an outward fashion, as a power to be imposed upon the mind of its docile, unquestioning recipients. They look upon the Bible as a great pronunciamento, as a declaration and promulgation of the thought, will, and purpose of the Almighty, to be accepted without hesitation and to be obeyed with alacrity. Accordingly they are prepared to believe anything and everything that the Bible says, because the Bible says it. Their position is virtually that of the little boy who argues with his playmates: "It's so, for ma says so; and if ma says so, it's so if it ain't so!" There are thousands of people who have reasoned in this way regarding the Bible, just as there are thousands more who have reasoned likewise regarding the Roman Catholic Church: they have practically said: "It is so, for the Bible or the Church says so; and if the Bible or the Church says so, it is so, no matter how clearly science or experience may prove the contrary." People have argued this way about geography, astronomy and geology, about slavery

[1] Luke vii. 8.

and wine-drinking, about capital punishment and the subjection of woman, about the existence of the devil and an everlasting hell. Because they have thought their views on these subjects were taught in the Bible, and because they have had this conception of the authority of the Bible, they have believed in such views and persecuted those who did not. It is this conception of the authority of the Bible which leads people to call the Sacred Volume "the Word of God" "from back to back" or "from lid to lid;" and they regard all criticism or dissecting of the Bible as the lifting of unholy hands against the oracles of the Most High.

2. There is the other conception of authority in its subjective aspect as mainly derived from an inner experience. For instance, you have a friend whom you revere and love; who is so great and noble, so pure and true that he instinctively and irresistibly attracts and holds your admiration, respect, confidence, and affection; who awakens in your soul such a feeling of sympathy, such a harmony of spirit, that all your finest affections go out to him, and you honor him, trust him, love him, and are happy in his presence. He does not ask such rich spiritual gifts from you, much less command them; but he gets them without asking, because he wins and deserves them by virtue of his own inherent worth. Therefore he has power over your soul— the very best and highest kind

of power—not so much by trying to have it, by exerting himself, as by simply being and being known to you. The diamond does not command our æsthetic love by saying anything, but by simply being a diamond and lying still before us in all its purity and perfection. The lily likewise does not request us to smile and rejoice when our eyes fall upon its delicate structure and sweet beauty; but we do this instinctively because we scarce can help it, because its own intrinsic loveliness meets and wins our delighted admiration. So it is with any great literary production, any true poem, any fine work of art, any noble deed, any lofty and lovable human character; its own intrinsic excellence has power to win us to itself, to awaken within us and draw out from us the best thought and feeling of which we are capable. Such is always the power of real excellence in any form—real worth, real beauty, real goodness, real love; it makes its own sure impression upon the human soul; and in contrast with it how poor and hollow are all counterfeits, all falsehoods, all shams, all affectations, by whatsoever artifices they may be foisted upon us! Who does not know the difference between these? Who does not feel himself capable of detecting that difference? You know, by your own intuitions, without anybody's telling you, whether the love of your affianced is true love, whether your friend's professed friend-

ship is sincere, whether your minister's piety is genuine or affected.

Now this spiritual power over the human soul is the highest kind of power and the truest form of authority in all the world. Let us think of the father and his child. That father has a natural and proper right to command his child, and the physical ability to coerce him into obedience. But suppose he command and coerce him unrighteously and in anger; the child may, indeed, obey, but will he not obey under protest and with an inward sense of wrong that rebukes the father, and makes both father and child know that an injustice has been done? And is such obedience ever worth one-half so much as that which the father secures through right and reason and patient kindness, winning the child's full respect, honor, confidence, and love, and thus the free self-surrender of his own will in glad acquiescence in the father's will, which the child feels to be just and holy? Alas that we do not know more of this power of righteousness and love! But we know enough of it to know that it is the highest and truest power in the world. The laws of the land, with their executive agencies, may compel me to submit to some inherently unjust, iniquitous regulation, like the old fugitive slave law, for example; but such power over me can never equal in worth or efficiency that of an inherently righteous law which my own conscience approves. Therefore no law

can ever be really strong that is not grounded in righteousness; no government on earth can be permanently secure that is not established in justice and truth; and those governments must be most stable and happy, in the long run, which, like our own, "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

This spiritual power over the human soul was the kind of authority which Jesus possessed. It is said of him that the people "were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." That is to say, he did not repeat to them, at second hand, the letter of the Jewish law, in a formal or perfunctory manner; but declared to them the truth of divine things, fresh and living, from out of the depth and purity of his own spiritual insight, and with such evident sincerity and earnestness that his utterances carried conviction to the hearts of the people, and awoke within them an approving response which made them feel like saying, if they did not actually say, "Amen and amen! This is indeed the Christ! This is that Prophet that should come! Thou art a Teacher come from God!"

And this is precisely the kind of authority which Jesus possesses in the world today—the authority of convincing power, the power to win the assent of the mind, the approval of the conscience, the love of the heart, and the sanction

of the spirit. No other authority in all the world is comparable to it. It is like the silent power of the sunshine in the material world, that melts the iceberg, warms the earth, lifts the waters of ocean, lake and stream into the air, calls the grasses and flowers into life, and spreads beauty and fruitfulness everywhere. It is the authority or power of inherent spiritual excellence, bearing its own weight, making its own impress, winning its own sweet way among men, gaining the admiration, gratitude and affection of the soul, softening the hard heart, removing prejudice, overcoming wrath, rebuking, correcting, purifying, and invigorating the whole spirit and character. Where else shall we find such a power? No king, prince, or potentate, no military officer, no ecclesiastical dignitary ever possessed any such power except in so far as it was really of this kind; that is to say, no power different from this ever equaled it in effectiveness. And what authority do we more readily acknowledge? before what law do we more reverently and gladly bow than before "the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus"? There is no sway on earth today like the sway of this majestic Prophet of Nazareth, the principles and spirit of whose teachings and character are gradually achieving their victories over sordid, sinful, selfish, afflicted men and women, making them to aspire, to be generous and pure, to hope and love, to be patient, gentle, and strong. And yet all this

sway is only the influence of intrinsic spiritual excellence, embodied in the Son of Man and uttered in his spoken gospel. That Son of Man and that gospel are authoritative, that is, are of binding force, to you and me simply and only by virtue of their convincing power over our souls. If they have no such convincing power, they are not authoritative; but if they have, then we do actually acknowledge their authority, and in consistency ought to comply with it in all our conduct.

Now, in so far as the writings of the Bible possess any authority at all, it is of this spiritual kind. Theirs is not the authority of dictation, but the authority of conviction. Their power over the human soul is no less and no more than their power to win the assent of the mind, the approval of the conscience, the love of the heart, and the sanction of the spirit. And they do this through no factitious means. They have this power, not because they are writings of the Bible, but because they are writings of real and intrinsic worth—because they contain so large an element of truth, and breathe so potently the spirit of reverence, righteousness, trust, mercy, and love. Containing this truth and breathing this spirit, they help us to a clearer apprehension of this truth and a more complete realization of this spirit. In producing such an effect upon us they have to do it, and only so can do it, in the face of ignorance, doubts, questionings, misgivings,

moral delinquencies, and spiritual deficiencies on our part. They have to take us as they find us, as we are, and manifest their excellence to us, convince us of their truth, and impress us with whatever spirit of goodness they possess. If they can not do this, they can not have any authority for us. If the story of creation, in the first chapters of Genesis, cannot convince me of its truthfulness, cannot win the assent of my mind, it can by no possibility have any authority for me; I reject it, I cannot honestly accept it: how, then, can it be authoritative to me? If this sentence in Ps. cxxxix: "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?—I hate them with perfect hatred," can not win the approval of my conscience or the sanction of my spirit, it can not have any authority for me, and could not if it were written in a hundred Bibles. If Paul teaches that woman should be in subjection to man, and should not speak in meeting, and should not even dress her hair in becoming fashion; and if I do not agree with Paul, but believe in the equality of the sexes, and accord the same liberty to others that I claim for myself, then Paul's teachings can have no authority on that subject for me, however much I may like and endorse his utterances on other subjects. A similar remark is applicable to the teachings of St. Paul and the apostles generally regarding the second coming of Christ and the end of the world; if it is clear to me that they were

mistaken in their belief respecting this matter, their words cannot be authoritative doctrine for me to accept and inculcate now. If one of the gospel narratives says that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, and its testimony is not to me conclusive, it cannot have authority for me in this particular, for it cannot win the honest assent of my mind—and such assent must be honest, or it is really no assent at all.

On the other hand, if many of the historical statements of the gospels appear to me to be credible, and by all the tests I can apply or scholars have employed, are not invalidated, then they have authority for me; for I accept them with good reason; and I cannot accept anything without reason and at the same time preserve my intellectual integrity, which is the prime condition of all faith. If Jesus says, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;" [2] and if this injunction awakens an approving response in my soul, leading me to say: "Yea, and amen! if everybody would do that, the world would be soon rid of hate," then that utterance is a divine law with highest authority for me: it meets with the sanction of the purest and best spirit in my soul, and I can follow no higher or better authority than the highest and best that I am capable of appreciating. Or, if

[2] Matt. v. 44.

Paul says: "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another;" "render to no man evil for evil;" "let him that stole steal no more;" "let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth;" "pray always;" "in everything give thanks," etc.; and if I respond: "Yes, Paul, you are right; such are true and blessed injunctions, and would that all men might heed them!" then those sayings, receiving thus the sanction of the holiest spirit in my heart, become a heavenly mandate for my soul, with as much authority as if spoken by an angel.

In view of these considerations, I conclude that the nature of the authority possessed by the Bible, or by any part of it, is simply its spiritual power over our souls—its power to win the assent of the mind, or the approval of the conscience, or the love of the heart, or the sanction of the spirit. And the extent to which the Bible, or any part of it, is thus authoritative is precisely the extent to which it has this power. The authority of the Bible is therefore the authority of a helper—no more, no less. The Bible does not solve for me the great problems of life; it merely helps me to solve them. The Bible does not make me believe in God; it simply helps me to believe in him. The Bible does not make me believe in human immortality; it simply helps me to believe in it. The Bible does not make me good; it simply helps me to be good.

Accordingly, nothing is to be accepted just because it is in the Bible; there must be other good and sufficient reasons for such acceptance, as there must be also for rejection. Even though the doctrine of endless punishment were taught in the Bible, I should not feel that therefore I must believe it. Or if I am convinced that the doctrine of universalism is taught in the Bible, this fact alone is not an adequate reason for my belief in that doctrine; other considerations must harmonize with it and support it. And what I here say about the Bible I would say, with all reverence, about Jesus Christ. I do not believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ merely because they are his teachings, although I wish to say very emphatically that *the fact of his teaching any given doctrine would go a great way toward leading me to believe in it*—would go farther, indeed, than any other influence except my own best thought and purest spirit. Rather, I believe in Jesus Christ because he taught what he did. In other words, I do not accept the teachings of Christ because I believe that God sent him into the world. Rather, I believe that God sent him into the world because I see and feel that his teachings are true; they appeal to the best that is in me, and the best that is in me responds with a deep and holy approval. That is to say, the teachings of Jesus Christ must stand upon their own intrinsic merits, as must all teachings in the last analysis. If

they are to endure and do good in the world, as I have the utmost faith that they are, it will be because they deserve to do so, not merely because he inculcated them. And the grandest thing about Christ's teachings is that the experience of mankind is all the time proving their merits, and thus giving to them the cumulative power of repeated and increasing corroboration and re-inforcement.[3]

We see, then, that everything in the Bible, even everything in the teachings of Jesus Christ, is to be brought to the touchstone of the human soul itself, to be tested and thereupon accepted or rejected.[4] People may call this rationalism and heresy; it is merely that view of spiritual things which perceives that the human soul, although it is not the author of truth, is emphatically the judge of truth. I may not originate, or even discover, the law of gravitation; but I can test it. I may not be the author of the great principle of brotherly love; but I can tell whether it is a beneficent force

[3] The Bible is a great record of human experience in moral and religious things. As such it becomes a kind of spiritual mirror, which, when one looks into it, brings one to spiritual self-knowledge by reflecting and interpreting one's own similar experiences; and thus it both stimulates and enlarges those personal experiences, while tending to correct their eccentricities by the influence of the many on the one. So experience is perpetually confirming the deep things of the Bible, while at the same time the Bible is perpetually awakening and confirming the deep experiences of the individual soul. The voice of God in the soul answers to the voice of God in those other souls whose earnest words constitute the Bible.

[4] This is precisely the genuine Lutheran, as opposed to the post-Lutheran, view. See Dr. Tholuck's article, "The Doctrine of Inspiration," quoted above.

in human society. I may not be the first to dream of human immortality; but I can say whether I consider it to be anything more than a dream. Jesus Christ may reveal or declare to me the Fatherhood of God; but it is for me to decide, and in all lowliness I must hold myself competent to decide for myself, whether I believe that sublime doctrine to be reasonable, soul-satisfying, and blessed. And so I do not say that man is to be deemed the *author* of religious truth; but I do say that he is to be regarded as the *judge* of it —a distinction which we need always to bear in mind.[5] I do not claim that man may write his own Bible, and has no need of the Hebrew and Christian Bible; or that man may be his own Savior, and does not need such a saving teacher as Jesus Christ—far be it from me to suggest the thought!—but I do maintain that he is to pronounce, as best he can, upon their merits, and that they can have no authority for him except as they win the assent of his mind, the approval of his conscience, the love of his heart, and the sanction of his spirit.

I see no escape from this position except in the surrender of the intellectual, moral, and religious judgment of the individual human soul.[6] Either

[5] "He that is spiritual judgeth all things." (I Cor. ii. 15).

[6] See Professor Wilhelm Hermann's *Faith and Morals* (G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), which has come to hand since this chapter was written. He insists throughout on the point here made. See especially pp. 175–85; also p. 285: "Only the man who can stand

we must judge for ourselves, or we must yield to the judgment of another. We may yield to the assertion of a great and mighty Church, or to the declaration of the Holy Scriptures, or to the utterance of Jesus Christ, or to the interpretation of these given by one of our fellow-men; but if we thus yield without finally deciding for ourselves as to what we consider to be true and right and obligatory, we simply abdicate the supreme privilege and responsibility of a spiritual being, namely, *self-determination.* Let us remember that Jesus Christ never requires any such abdication on our part; rather he summons us always to judgment, decision, choice, self-direction. He said to the people: "Why even of yourselves judge ye not not what is right?"[7] "Judge not acing to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment;"[8] "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."[9] His appeal in all his teaching is to the deepest, purest, highest thought and spirit in the soul of man; and forever does he urge men to take his teaching and put it to the supreme test of experience in actual conduct. He waits for men to accept him; if they reject him, he leaves the

by himself in the strength of his moral perceptions can be religiously alive. For it is only in his independent perception of what is good that he has the ability to perceive the power of God that is at work upon him." The volume is extremely valuable as a cogent statement of the true Protestant position.

[7] Luke xii. 57.

[8] John vii. 24.

[9] Matt. xi. 15.

responsibility with them; he never seeks to drive people, but rather seeks to lead them by winning their free indorsement, trust, and love. In this he is supremely wise; he respects too much the august nature of the human soul ever to coerce anyone by imposing his authority upon mind, conscience, or heart. He will have our intelligent, sincere, voluntary, affectionate discipleship, or he will let us go our own way. Likewise, the Bible does not dictate. It exhibits divine truth, and indicates the will of God; it appeals, exhorts, entreats, urges the holiest considerations, and pleads with men for righteous and pure living; but it leaves the duty of decision and action with them, saying: "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve." [10] And because the formation of correct spiritual judgments, in matters of morality and religion, constitutes a large part of our best education, the Bible affords us in its varied and rich literature the most valuable material we possess, aside from our own daily experience with our fellow-men, for making the most important distinctions we are ever required to make, namely, the distinctions between right and wrong, between true and false, in conduct and character, in the service of God and man. Therefore it is of the greatest consequence that the view of the Bible which I have presented, calling upon the individual soul for discernment, and leaving with the in-

[10] Josh. xxiv. 15.

dividual soul at all hazards the privilege and duty of final judgment as to the teachings of the Bible, should be maintained as against that conception of its authority which virtually denies the right of such private judgment.

I am aware that this reasoning will seem to cut the ground out from under the feet of many devout and earnest people. I know very well how strongly certain excellent persons desire to believe in a Bible and a Savior given directly from God, bearing the unmistakable seal of his approval, whose utterances may be accepted without any question or misgiving. Such a faith in such a Bible and such a Savior seems to afford great rest, peace, and comfort to the soul; and I can easily understand how, for weary, troubled, sin-sick mortals, it is an unspeakable relief to believe, with reference to Christ particularly, that they can lay all their burdens down at the feet of an infallible Teacher of divine truth, a heavenly Savior, who actually knows what divine truth is, without any uncertainty, and who therefore is able to remove all their perplexities, so that they need only to hear what he says, take his word with implicit trust, and go on obeying it, no longer trying to think out for themselves the great problems of life, but simply believing and doing their duty with child-like docility and fidelity. I grant, indeed, that this attitude is natural, reasonable, and wholesome, especially for those who have

been torn by temptation and sin, distracted by doubts, and overwhelmed by sorrow; and I rejoice to know that the Bible and Christ are able to meet just such needs, to deal with us all as with little children, to condescend to our lowliness and imperfection, to take us by the hand and lead us through the tangled pathway which we feel ourselves powerless to thread alone. In fact, so great is the Bible, and so great is the Savior, that they are both able to help the weakest as well as the strongest; and when the wrongs or the woes of life press most heavily upon us, when the world grows dark, and our feet falter, and our wisdom fails us, and our hearts are fearful, the Divine Voice, speaking through each of these Comforters, says to us: "This is the way, walk ye in it;" "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine;" "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

But in all this we need to remember that such help as we thus derive from Christ and the Bible springs, not from what we imagine them to be, but from what they really are. We cannot make either of them superhuman by merely calling them so; we cannot give to either an authority in spiritual things by ascribing all sorts of miracles and marvels to them; we cannot first put infallibility into them, and then appeal to them as infallible sources of moral and religious truth. Whatever truth there is in them already, regardless of us,

will help us when we find it; and no amount of reverent and extravagant praise, no factitious claims, no superlative adjectives, can make them other than what they actually are. What they are is, as I have said that they are, helpers to true living—not substitutes for thought, or love, or the dictates of conscience, or the spirit of holiness in ourselves; but simply aids to all these; and the only authority they possess is in their power to draw us toward the life of God, or to awaken us to a consciousness of the life of God within us—a power which they are perpetually proving themselves to have, as one after another of God's children puts them to the supreme test of practice. If you and I will but learn to apply this test, we shall soon find that both Christ and the Bible are able to lift our souls into the sunshine of the Divine Presence, ever mysterious and ever blessed, wherein the clouds of error, doubt, and sin dissolve, and where alone can be found the "peace which passeth all understanding."

PART II

THE VALUE AND USE OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER IX

THE NEW APPRECIATION OF THE BIBLE

It is interesting to study the workings of the human mind in its progressive apprehension of the truth. We may properly say that the realities of the universe, spiritual as well as material, forever await our cognition; but the universe is infinite and its realities are marvelously complex, while we are finite and our mental expansion at best must be gradual; hence we acquire our knowledge in fragments, by glimpses and slowly enlarging visions, and often through painful efforts to readjust ourselves to the changing views which command our attention.

A new idea is liable to shock, disturb, and perhaps alarm us, if not indeed to arouse our angry opposition; but later, when we become acquainted with it and find it a friend instead of an enemy, we assent to its claims, embrace it, and let it enrich our lives. How frequently this twofold experience has occurred, on a vast scale, even in the most important movements of thought, the history of Christianity and of modern learning abundantly shows. Jesus Christ came inculcating a liberal and lofty doctrine, far in advance of his time; but because his countrymen could not appreciate it, or would not allow it to displace their cherished notions, he had to suffer martyrdom;

yet later the world discovered that his was the most sublime teaching ever imparted, and now his name is honored as is none other in all the earth. When Galileo and Copernicus first enunciated their conceptions of the solar system, they were denounced as enemies of the Christian faith, and were subjected by the ecclesiastical authorities to shameful persecution; yet now all Christendom gladly acknowledges an immense debt of gratitude to them and to other scholars like them for a stupendous enlargement of man's vision of the Divine Order in the material universe. The same thing is true of the disclosures of modern geology, which at first were repudiated as atheistic because not harmonizing with the accounts of creation given in Genesis, but later came to be recognized as vastly increasing the Christian's belief in the infinite wisdom and power of him who may be now called, with greater fitness than ever before, the "Ancient of Days." Finally, in our own age, we have seen the wonderful theory of evolution condemned for similar reasons; and yet, so swiftly fly the wheels of time, this very generation has witnessed the quick reversal of this early judgment, and the grateful acceptance at present, by a host of the most intelligent and consistent Christians, of the evolutionary hypothesis as the largest contribution to religious faith—that is, to faith in a divinely ordered universe—which mankind has ever received, except from the gospel itself.

Such instances should teach us the folly of hasty opposition to new ideas. At the same time they should teach us patience; for we see that a prolonged effort is often necessary for the human mind to adapt its vision to the new light, to modify its old conceptions, to recast its thinking, and so perhaps to alter habits of conduct, methods of work, and the character of outward institutions.

Moreover, it is to be observed that different classes of people come to the apprehension of new truth with varying degrees of promptness. Naturally, the inquirers, investigators, explorers are the first to find it; then the scholars, very likely, pass judgment upon it; then the teachers, students, and intelligent readers learn about it; and last of all it reaches the multitude. Thus it may easily happen that the more enlightened among all these may become familiar with new ideas and facts, accepting and appreciating them, long before less progressive minds are made aware of them; and so what is fully established with the educated at a given time may be just beginning to disturb others and to evoke their antagonism. At length, however, verified knowledge filters down through all grades of society, becoming the property of every mind and enriching the whole world.

Now it cannot be surprising to find that precisely such a history has repeated itself in the study of the Bible. We have learned that, during

the last two centuries, there has been growing up, among the scholarly classes, a new general conception of the origin and character of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, which is not less important, in its implications and within the field of its influence, than the scientific disclosures in the physical realm to which allusion has been made. This conception, too, is scientific, and the noble science that has yielded it is given the name of "Biblical Criticism." Slowly and patiently, with laborious research, through many conflicts of opinion, and often in the face of bitter opposition, its theories and conclusions have been wrought out; and at length there is a vast body of information, legitimately entitled to be called scientific knowledge, which is unhesitatingly accepted by a host of the best scholars of the world, and is now freely shedding its light upon the wider circles that must soon greatly benefit by it and rejoice in it.

As yet, however, while this new and scientific view of the Bible may be said to be substantially established among large numbers of the educated classes and is rapidly winning new adherents, it is still in the disturbing, perplexing stage among the common people. They have heard something about it, but they do not understand it. Naturally and rightfully they cling to their old conceptions because these are deeply rooted in their minds and seem very precious, and because they

do not quite comprehend the significance of the proffered substitute. What is needed, therefore, is not denunciation, on either hand, but information, instruction, enlightenment, patient consideration. Fortunately, much of this is now being afforded in many wise and helpful ways. Within recent years numerous handbooks have been published which have simplified the knowledge contained in the elaborate works of the scholars; the writings of the Bible have been issued in various translations and in attractive literary forms; and the ministers have taught their congregations and Sunday-school teachers somewhat of the new truth about the Sacred Volume as it has been elucidated by the science of biblical criticism.

As a result of all this education, both professional and popular, it is now beginning to be apparent to many thoughtful minds that the grand outcome of modern learning in this fertile field is, not a depreciation of the Bible, as some have feared, but rather a new and higher appreciation of it. This very gratifying fact is full of encouragement and inspiration for all who cherish the most vital interests of spiritual religion. Accordingly it becomes a happy privilege to portray the principal features of what may be thus most confidently stlyed "The New Appreciation of the Bible," so that it may be appropriated, and fresh light and power may be derived from the venerable pages of Holy Writ.

We are all aware that there was an old appreciation of the Bible, and that it is now passing away. It regarded the Book, from beginning to end, as "the Word of God." By this phrase was meant that it was fully inspired by the Almighty, and was infallible in its teachings; that it was all essentially alike in its nature, so that no part could be rejected without invalidating the whole; and especially that it constituted a divine revelation—that is, a revelation of God's thought and will concerning man, of his mercy and love, of the way of salvation, and of the eternal destiny of the human soul. Therefore a knowledge of the Bible, and particularly of the Savior whom it manifested, was considered indispensable to the redemption of mankind; and so missionaries have been prompted to go into all the world carrying these Holy Scriptures as a veritable way of life for the perishing nations, without which they were indeed rushing into the bottomless pit.

In this view the Bible was thought to bring to each person a direct message from God, intended as much for one reader as for another, and literally intended for all; that is to say, addressed as much to the people of the twentieth century as to those of the first—a proclamation or summons from the Throne of Heaven to every man on the face of the earth whom it might reach; and woe unto him whom it did not reach! And likewise woe unto him who, hearing, rejected or disre-

garded it! How, then, could anyone who sincerely entertained such a conception fail to reverence, honor, and love these precious Writings, or fail to read them diligently, with fear and trembling? As a matter of fact, pious and earnest Christians did so esteem and treat them; and when the Scriptures began to be translated out of the Latin into the common tongues of Germany and England, in the sixteenth century, the people received them with devoutest joy and perused them with unwearied zeal; and we read of Puritan divines, in Boston, about 1635, sitting up all night, in the dead of winter, to study these written oracles of the Most High God. This conception and use of the Bible are sweetly embalmed for us in the poem of Robert Burns entitled *The Cotter's Saturday Night.*

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big ha'-Bible, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets[1] wearing thin an' bare;
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,
He wales[2] a portion with judicious care;
And "Let us worship God!" he says, with solemn air.

The priestlike father reads the sacred page,
How Abram was the friend of God on high;
Or Moses bade eternal warfare wage
With Amalek's ungracious progeny;

[1] Grey locks.

[2] Chooses.

Or how the royal Bard did groaning lie
  Beneath the stroke of Heaven's avenging ire;
Or Job's pathetic plaint, and wailing cry;
  Or rapt Isaiah's wild, seraphic fire;
  Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme,
  How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed;
How He, who bore in Heav'n the second name,
  Had not on earth whereon to lay His head:
How His first followers and servants sped;
  The precepts sage they wrote to many a land:
How he, who lone in Patmos banished,
  Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand;
And heard great Bab'lon's doom pronounced by
    Heav'n's command.

Then kneeling down, to Heav'n's Eternal King,
  The saint, the father, and the husband prays:
Hope "springs exulting on triumphant wing,"
  That thus they all shall meet in future days:
There ever bask in uncreated rays,
  No more to sigh, or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their Creator's praise,
  In such society, yet still more dear;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

How many souls have been brought to a conscious communion with God, to pure and faithful living, and to a triumphant death, under this old, reverent appreciation of the Bible, only the Recording Angel could tell; certainly their number is legion; and if these moral and religious influences shall pass out of our civilization with the passing of the traditional ideas of the nature of the Bible, without leaving a better substitute, our

civilization will suffer a spiritual impoverishment scarcely to be measured. But we must do our utmost to make sure that, with the coming of a new conception of the origin and character of the Bible, there shall come also a new appreciation of its great excellence, a new understanding of the truth which it discloses, and a more vital grasp of the spiritual realities to which it bears potent and perennial witness.

Let us begin by glancing at three fundamental aspects of the new appreciation of the Bible, the due consideration of which will prepare us for further estimates and applications.

1. There is a new appreciation of the Bible as *literature*. It is as a body of literature that the new conception primarily regards it. For, whatever else the Bible may be, and whatever messages of divine import it may contain for us, it comes to us first of all as a collection of ancient writings—not a single book, but a library of sixty-six different books. As such a mass of literature, it is to be examined, analyzed, and appraised by the same rules and processes of study which the experience of scholars has found necessary in the study of any other literary products treated as literature; that is to say, no theory of supernatural inspiration can be allowed to set aside the fact that the Bible was written by men, in human language, under certain intelligible historical circumstances. Our first task, therefore,

is to take any given portion of the Scriptures simply as a piece of human writing, to understand what the author says, to comprehend what he means as fully as we can, and, in order that we may do this, to have some clear and correct idea of the conditions under which he wrote, as to time and place, national or social influences, relations to surrounding nations, prevailing views, and any other elements in the situation which may explain his message.

Doing these things for the various writings which make up the Bible, we soon find that they constitute a peculiar literature—narrow, but deep; profoundly ethical, intensely religious, and wonderfully expressive of the spiritual experiences of the earnest human soul. But we also discover that there is a great variety in its contents, that it is not all alike, either in literary form, or in ideas and ideals. It contains history, philosophy, poetry of many kinds, fiction, love-stories, a hymn-book, collections of maxims for practical conduct, brief biographies, letters of spiritual counsel and friendly correspondence, and ecstatic visions of seers and dreamers, along with sermons that rebuke sin and plead for uprightness with passionate ardor. And the quality of its utterances ranges from the childish notions of a primitive people just emerging from slavery, and from the moral pessimism of a satiated sensualist, to the sublimest and most comprehensive thought of the

greatest spiritual Teacher the world has ever known, and to the mighty grasp of truth and the glorified ethical devotion of a philosopher who had drunk deeply from the wells of his ancestral religion, who knew something about the speculation and culture of Greece, and who had found the solution of life's problems in the holy gospel of the Son of Man.

It is in view of facts like these that many intelligent people are now pleading for the literary study of the Bible, especially in our colleges and universities. The Reverend Theodore T. Munger, D.D., was one of the first to make such a plea, perhaps as early as about 1885; others heartily approved the idea, and soon biblical professorships were established in a few institutions not specifically for the education of ministers. Now there are such professorships in a considerable number of the universities, and the work of the department meets with increasing favor. Meanwhile, writers like Dr. Hamilton W. Mabie and Professor Richard G. Moulton are doing much to popularize this important idea. Professor Moulton holds the chair of English literature in the University of Chicago, and stands in the front rank of competent literary judges; and he has written:

> It is surely good that our youth, during the formative period, should have displayed to them, in a literary dress as brilliant as that of Greek literature—in lyrics

which Pindar cannot surpass, in rhetoric as forcible as that of Demosthenes, or contemplative prose not inferior to Plato's—a people dominated by an utter passion for righteousness, a people whom ideas of purity, of infinite good, of universal order, of faith in the irresistible downfall of all moral evil, moved to a poetic passion as fervid, and speech as musical, as when Sappho sang of love or Æschylus thundered his deep notes of destiny. When it is added that the familiarity of the English Bible renders all this possible without the demand upon the time-table that would be involved in the learning of another language, it seems clear that our school and college curricula will not have shaken off their mediæval narrowness and renaissance paganism until classical and biblical literatures stand side by side as sources of our highest culture.[3]

Again he has said:

A knowledge of Jewish literature and principles of morality and religion is essential, not only for our religious life, but for a complete education. Our modern life is drawn from two sources: from Greece we obtain our intellectual elements, from Palestine we take our religion and our moral ideals. A knowledge of classic literature has always been considered necessary to complete education. If, however, we study the classics only, our education becomes one-sided. In order to come into contact with the other essential element of our life, we must study the Jewish literature as we find it in the Bible.[4]

The same writer points out that the mechanical form in which the writings of the Bible come to us hinders our appreciation of their literary structure.

In mediæval times following the method of Jewish rabbis, the Bible was viewed as a collection of texts,

[3] *The Literary Study of the Bible*, pp. ix, x.

[4] A newspaper report of a lecture.

and the only work in interpretation of the Bible was in the form of commenting upon those texts. . . . . At the time of the writing of the King James' version, this mediæval spirit was at its height. As a consequence, our Bible is divided into verses and chapters. This division is harmful to a thoughtful interpretation of the whole. . . . . If we should make a collection of the works of Shakespeare, the essays of Emerson, the poems of Milton, and others of our great literary productions, remove from them all distinguishing marks of titles, so as to have a great conglomerate literary mass, and then should divide this mass into sections merely with regard to convenience of use as a textbook, but not distinguishing the different literary characteristics of the different works, we would have a condition exactly corresponding to that in the King James' version. The difficulty of interpreting such a mass is easily seen.[5]

Professor Moulton himself has rendered the English-reading public a great service in this very direction by arranging all the books of the Bible, with their various contents, in what he conceives to be their appropriate literary form, so that the printed page enables the eye to see this at a glance, and by supplying introductory explanations, titles, and notes; and the entire work has been published in a series of most convenient little volumes which it is a delight to handle and read, and which may be had for about forty cents each.

If we approach and treat the Bible in the manner here indicated, we shall soon acquiesce in the judgment of Dr. Hamilton W. Mabie, that

the conception of the Bible as literature is the only rational way of conceiving of it. Without the imagina-

[5] The same newspaper report.

tion which created the Bible, it cannot be understood. If it should come to us today unknown to us, how eagerly all men would turn to it! It is just as beautiful, and just as great, and just as divine as if it had been found only yesterday.[6]

2. There is next a new appreciation of the Bible as *history*. It comes to us out of a distant past, and it makes that past live again vividly, instructively, impressively. To most men the ages that are gone are a dim, shadowy, dark background. Personal memory is very short; family traditions are exceedingly uncertain; and beyond two or three generations the great majority of people can scarcely have any reliable information which does not come from an intelligent study of history. Like a great cloud on the far horizon, or like a vast, unexplored wilderness, is the unknown life of former times until illumined by the historian's torch. And because the present life of the world, with its manifold interests and tendencies, is the product of the past, and therefore can be understood only in the light of its antecedents, history becomes a most important branch of learning. Never was its importance more appreciated than now; never was its pursuit so realistic, so fascinating, so profitable.

Now the Bible takes our thought backward nearly four thousand years; and the earlier half of this period, as it concerns certain extremely

[6] Newspaper report of address, December 19, 1903.

significant developments, is reflected with remarkable clearness in its pages. As we read those pages we see, not only the people of Israel, but also those of Chaldea, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Phœnicia, Syria, Arabia, Greece, and Rome; and we learn something thus of the most influential civilizations of antiquity. Soon do we discover that the men of those ancient days were men of like passions with ourselves; the essential unity of the human race is confirmed in our thought; and the great, spiritual laws that govern conduct, together with the mighty Providence that overrules the affairs and events of nations, are displayed on a stupendous scale. A sense of continuity grows up in the mind; we understand how, to the Divine Government, "a thousand years . . . . are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night;" and so nothing less than the sublime thought of God, transcendent yet immanent, can satisfy and hold us, can steady and guide us, as we think of our little, personal lives in the far-reaching stream of history. Thus the past lives again only to make the present even more real than ever; and we have faith in the future because we are thus enabled to *see* somewhat of "the purpose of the ages."

Only the historical view of the Bible—the view which reproduces, both generally and with much detail, the times and conditions out of which it grew up as a living literature—can serve us in

this way. To regard the Bible first as written primarily for *us,* of a later time, is to miss this conception and service almost wholly; but to regard it first as the product of a deep, strong, active life, lived by a certain people under definite circumstances in the distant past, is to make that life and that past very real; and *then* we are ready, as we cannot otherwise be, to connect the present and ourselves with those earlier struggles of mankind toward God and goodness, and to read our own aspirations and conflicts in the light of a vast, spiritual process of disciplinary development. Thus to see each individual life in its large relations, perceiving how the Divine Order runs and works through all generations, is to derive one of the richest helps to faith and consecration which any religious ministry can afford. In the new sense of history which the historical and literary study of the Bible is quickening, we shall experience not only an increase of knowledge, but also an enlargement of view, a clarification of insight, and a deepening of reverence, gratitude and trust, issuing in a fresh devotion and patience.

So long as our religion continues to look to history for a considerable measure of its authentication, it must be careful to look to the *truth* of history. Christianity is, indeed, an historical religion, and Judaism is doubly so, in the sense that both have had a birth and a career in the past; and

if their claims are to be urged in the present, as binding upon us, they must submit themselves to a rigid examination of their historical antecedents, course, and influence. Therefore the Bible, as the literary product of those two forms of religious development, must be more and more scrutinizingly studied in connection with the history comprised in it. That history will become clearer and clearer, and in turn will make the pages of the Bible more and more luminous; and both in turn will help the individual soul of today to interpret its own spiritual experiences, and so to enter into a new and larger understanding of the works and ways of God in human life—"a householder that bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old."

3. There is a new appreciation of the Bible as *a revelation of life.* It discloses a certain type of life in so marked a degree as almost to make it seem unique in kind. We call it *spiritual life,* and, indeed, can give it no better name; for it is the life of the spirit, a spirit of moral and religious earnestness which gave its possessors a distinctive character. Other peoples have been more brilliant intellectually and æsthetically; but among no people has the moral sense been so keen, or the religious apprehension so clear and strong, as among the Hebrews. As Sabatier truly says:

> When one is in the state of mind which may properly be called moral piety, it is impossible not to be struck by

the nature and power of that spirit of holiness which created the history of Israel, the life and work of Christ, and in them reveals itself. There, amid the shadows and the sorrows of the times and the race, is a succession of men of God, each the spiritual father of the other, and all together creating in the bosom of humanity the high religion of the spirit. Their history is the history of God himself taking possession of the human soul, becoming the inmate of the human consciousness to such an extent as in the consciousness of Christ to be identified with it.[7]

This exalted spiritual life, pure and vigorous, which we discern as we read and ponder the Scriptures, becomes to us a revelation of the capabilities of the human soul. We readily understand that there is one kind of life among the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air; another kind among human beings who yet stand upon the physical plane merely, or but little above it; and still another kind among those races or individuals that have awakened to intellectual consciousness, and have attained to some measure of knowledge and culture; but here, above even this *psychical* plane, we recognize still another kind of life, which we call *spiritual,* or (to use a New Testament word) *pneumatical.* It is the life of human souls that have been awakened to moral and religious consciousness, and have attained to some clear, trustworthy apprehensions, convictions, judgments, and determinations respecting the divine order of the world. It is essentially a

[7] *Religions of Authority,* p. 241.

type of human experience, and its expression in the literature of the Bible opens a vista of progress for other souls that have not yet tasted the joy of this higher, finer, holier development. It is as natural as the experience, the attainment, and the rapture of a great musician; but its blessings are available to a larger number of people, for *all* are spiritual beings, and *all* may be brought to some moral and religious awakenment. The spiritual life manifested in the Bible becomes both example and inspiration for all mankind. That which was realized in so large a degree by the ancient people of Israel, and especially by Jesus Christ and his noblest disciples, is realized in some degree by us, and may be more fully realized by all men when the great, spiritual purposes and plans of the Divine Providence shall be wrought out to a more complete fulfilment. And it thus appears to be precisely our greatest privilege and duty now to enter upon this glorious heritage and birthright, to "awake out of sleep," to rise into a full realization of the blessedness of that spiritual life which the Bible so forcibly brings to our notice, and of which the Christianity of Christ is the finest flower and fruit.

Because the Bible exhibits, more perfectly than any other literature, this noblest type of life, it will be increasingly appreciated as our civilization becomes more truly spiritualized. The "letter" of the Bible, indeed, may not be rigidly accepted

—it certainly will not be, in a multitude of instances; but the "spirit" and power of the Bible will receive a greater honor than hitherto, and will sway the minds and hearts of men more effectually, as our race moves slowly upward nearer to the lofty level of Jesus Christ.

Here, then, we find a threefold appreciation of the Bible which promises, not only to be permanent, but to increase; namely, as a great literature, profound and powerful, of perennial interest and vitality; as the product and record of a wonderful spiritual history, whose influence is rapidly becoming world-wide; and, as a revelation of an exalted and sublime type of human life, prophetic of a blessed moral and religious development which is at least possible to the whole family of mankind.

As the old appreciation of the Bible passes away, because of the breaking down of some of the theoretical conceptions which it implied, we may reasonably expect this *new* appreciation to take its place in the thought and affection of enlightened people, and gradually to win a new allegiance and a new dominion in the spiritual life of coming generations.

CHAPTER X

THE BIBLE AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

The new appreciation of the Bible, as literature, as history, and as a revelation of life, may be profitably supplemented by a fresh consideration of its relation to human progress. The subject is a large one, presenting many aspects, and opening the way for extravagant statements; yet it ought to be possible to arrive at an intelligent, discriminating, and approximately just judgment. Such, at least, should be our aim; and if we hold fast to this purpose, we shall not be likely to wander far from the truth.

The career of the Bible covers roundly three thousand years, including the earlier stages of the distinct national life out of which it arose. How large a portion is this of the entire known history of the world? Not half of it, so far as time alone is concerned; for the civilization of Chaldea dates back nearly twice as far—at least to 3700 B. C.; while that of Egypt has an antiquity much greater still, being traceable to the remote distance of 6000 B. C. Besides, the Bible has been limited in its direct ministry to a comparatively small part of the human family. Of course it was confined to the Israelites at first, until the advent of Christianity; and even of those only a fragment really knew anything about it—that is, about the Old

Testament, for the New Testament was not yet produced; because, of the multitudes who had been carried away into the Babylonian Captivity, not more than about 40,000 returned to Palestine, bringing the substance of "The Law" and "The Prophets" with them,[1] to which were subsequently and slowly added the other writings which complete the Hebrew Scriptures. Then as the dispersed Jews, and later the Christian missionaries, bore some parts or some knowledge of the Bible abroad, it was only into the Græco-Roman world that they went with such a possession: the teeming millions of Asia lay mainly beyond their reach, the savages of Africa were unknown, and nobody had ever dreamed of the western hemisphere which we now inhabit, or of the wild peoples who have been since discovered in the isles of the sea and at the ends of the earth. It was not until quite late in the modern era—principally within the nineteenth century—that the Bible began to find its way into all lands and races and tongues. Yet even now scarcely more than 400,000,000 of the 1,400,000,000 of the population of the globe—less than one-third—can be claimed as Jews and Christians, using our Scriptures.

But the nations reached by the Bible in this period of three thousand years have been precisely those that have had most to do with the develop-

[1] Yet the Law and the Prophets remained also with the non-returning, and a close correspondence was kept up with Babylon, e. g., by Nehemiah.

ment of a progressive civilization. First it touched the Greeks, modifying and being modified by the subtle, brilliant, many-sided genius of that wonderful race; with the result of giving Europe a Hellenized Judaism as the body of Christianity, with the teaching of Jesus as its soul. Next it engaged the Romans, the most orderly, practical, conquering, governing people known in history; and they built its precepts and ideas, with somewhat of its holy spirit, into the new institutions of the European nations that grew up to take the place of the decaying Empire. Then it came into contact with the Teutonic race, and may be said to have exerted its influence upon the fresh, free, and vigorous spirit of this noble stock more strongly than upon any other in its whole career.

Now when we reflect that the Greeks, Romans, and Teutons have virtually made Europe as we know it, excluding the Slavic portions, and have thus produced our western civilization, as we see it in France, Germany, Scandinavia, Great Britain, and America, and to a large extent also in Austria, Italy, and Spain; and when we further reflect that the various branches of the Teutonic race are still expanding and seem likely to play an enormous rôle in the affairs of the world in the immediate future, we can see how closely the Bible has been connected with whatever progress has actually taken place; and we thus obtain a broad basis upon which to estimate the manner in

which the Bible has helped to effect or modify such progress.

That spiritual progress has actually occurred during the last two or three thousand years, can not be seriously questioned. One does not need to indulge in overpraise of our own time, or to be blind to existing evils, in order to maintain that the modern world is far in advance of the ancient world in most of those respects which relate to the higher interests of mankind. While art and philosophy and a certain buoyant joyousness reached a degree of perfection in the golden age of Greece which the present age of Europe and America does not witness, we remember that those were blessings for the few rather than for the many. The prevalence of slavery precluded any better state of things; for in both Greece and Rome in their palmiest days about one-half of the population consisted of slaves; and although many of these were highly educated, often being teachers, artists, architects, physicians, and even merchants and bankers, the profits of whose labors accrued to their masters, yet the existence of such a fundamental institution on so vast a scale prevented the uplift of society as a whole. The very fact that at length this condition has been left far behind is itself one of the clearest and most substantial proofs of the great improvement which has taken place during the Christian era.

To describe this improvement in its many phases would be to trace the history of Christian civilization, which is impossible here. It is not difficult, however, to indicate its general character, its main aspects, and some of the influences contributing to its production, even within the compass of a few pages.

1. Perhaps the most significant feature of the spiritual progress which has been accomplished since the days of Mesopotamian supremacy has been the slowly growing appreciation of human nature—the rise in value of the individual man.[2] A new sense of the sacredness of human life, a higher estimate of the capacity of the human soul generically, a more sublime conception of human destiny, and a wider, more real sentiment of human brotherhood have crept into the consciousness of millions of people, making the modern world vastly different from the ancient, and vastly nobler and brighter for the average man. While the various activities of the human mind, the growth of knowledge, the conquest of material nature, the enlarging universe, have all helped to beget this increasing sense of dignity, this enhancement of human values, it is certain that another powerful factor has lain in the teaching of the Bible. The passing of polytheism and the establishment of monotheism, with its ideas of an

[2] See the chapter on "The Spiritual Element in Social Service" in the author's *The Spiritual Outlook* (1902).

almighty spiritual Deity, Maker and Ruler of the universe, Father of the spirits of all flesh, Governor among the nations, Judge of all the earth, holding moral relations with mankind, righteous in all his dealings, respecting no man's person or station, yet infinite in mercy, and loving every soul with an everlasting love—this has brought the human race, and every member of it who has learned the lesson, into a position of honor and unity under a Divine Government which has ennobled and sanctified life and every interest as nothing else conceivable could have done; and all this has come directly from the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. They are full of precisely these conceptions, and wherever they have gone they have operated, even through imperfect and often obstructive agencies, to educate the children of men to this exalted thought of their place in the scale of being. With our present knowledge of history, it is impossible to imagine what other influence could have effected such a result.

2. Along with this fundamental element, and partly in consequence of it, there has grown up in our developing civilization, during the extensive period referred to, a new feeling of respect, sympathy, and solicitude for man as the child of God. Nothing is more foreign to our modern ways of thinking, or seems more pitiful, than the almost universal contempt which prevailed in the ancient world for aliens or inferiors. But when people

began to think of all men as objects of the divine love, as having some standing thus in the court of the Most High, they gradually learned the difficult lesson of sympathy. This conception and this lesson, inculcated even in the Old Testament more fully than was at first understood, were greatly re-inforced by the example, spirit, and sacrifice of Christ. "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common,"[3] said the voice to Peter in the vision; and it led him to exclaim: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."[4]

So it was everywhere in some degree: a recognition of the great truth that God Almighty had loved the children of men, even the lowliest and the wickedest, sufficiently to provide for their eternal salvation, forbade the proud any longer to despise the humble, or the powerful to oppress the weak. Jew and gentile, bond and free, male and female came thus to stand upon a level in a new and very real way; and none was permitted to destroy, for any self-gratification, a brother for whom Christ had died.[5] Forbearance, forgiveness, charity, respect, sympathy, solicitude, brotherly kindness, mutual helpfulness, together with

[3] Acts x. 15.

[4] Acts x. 34, 35.

[5] Rom. xiv. 15.

an earnest aspiration toward all goodness—these were the traits and practices everywhere enjoined among the early Christians, as the letters of the New Testament abundantly witness; and the essential spirit of all this teaching was in keeping with the profounder meaning of the Old Testament revelation of the righteousness, mercy, and loving-kindness of God. Such counsels, appeals, and influences, overflowing at length the bounds of race and country, and spreading gradually throughout the Græco-Roman world, bore a new message of both divine and human love, yielding new hope, to millions weary with sin and suffering and the empty faiths and philosophies of the time; and so, little by little, a new spirit of justice and tenderness began to make itself felt at the heart of pagan civilization, like the sunshine in spring in our northern clime.

3. Thence arose the philanthropies of Christendom, whose name is legion, and whose work, in spite of many faults, has been the crowning glory of the passing centuries. As one reads a book like Charles Loring Brace's *Gesta Christi: A History of Humane Progress under Christianity,*[6] telling how some of the hoary evils of paganism—such as paternal tyranny, the subjection of womanhood, licentiousness, the exposure of children, slavery, war, and the unjust distribution of property—were assailed, checked, and

[6] New York: A. C. Armstrong, 1882 (4th ed., 1887).

largely overcome by the influence of the person and teaching of Jesus, operating through the lives of his followers, one sees not only how portentous was the struggle, but also how splendid was the victory, even though it has never been complete. Let a single paragraph indicate the tenor of the long and thrilling story:

> The influence of the great Friend of humanity was especially seen in the Roman Empire in checking licentious and cruel sports, so common and so demoralizing among the classic races; and in bringing on a new legislation of beneficence in favor of the outcast woman, the mutilated, the prisoner, and the slave. For the first time the stern and noble features of Roman law took on an unwonted expression of gentle humanity and sweet compassion, under the power of Him who was the brother of the unfortunate and the sinful. The great followers of the Teacher of Galilee became known as the "brothers of the slave," and the Christian religion began its struggle of many centuries with those greatest of human evils—slavery and serfdom. It did not, indeed, succeed in abolishing them; but the remarkable mitigations of the system in Roman law, and the constant drift toward a condition of liberty, and the increasing emancipation throughout the Roman Empire, are plainly fruits of its principles. All these and similar steps of humane progress are the *Gesta Christi* and the direct effects of His personal influence on the world.[7]

These sentences afford merely a hint of the vast humanitarian movement of the Christian era, which has not yet accomplished its holy mission, but which, even so, has brought incalculable benefits to mankind. Through many instrumentali-

[7] See *op. cit.*, p. 107.

ties—asceticism, monasticism, ecclesiasticism, schools, missions, charitable institutions of one kind and another—and notwithstanding blunders and dire consequences often, the benign spirit of Christian philanthropy has grappled with the actual and terrible evils of the world, and has slowly, partially, but substantially and nobly triumphed over them, establishing justice and sympathy in place of cruelty, and incarnating kindness in a thousand forms of social helpfulness.

4. Another outcome of the enhanced valuation of human nature resulting from the influence of the Bible, and especially from the influence of the Christian gospel, has been a slowly growing spirit of democracy. The enthronement of Jehovah as King of kings and Lord of lords, the one living and true God, the inexorable but impartial Judge of all the earth, the common Father of the children of men, had the effect of putting mankind upon a certain spiritual equality before him; artificial distinctions in society were obliterated; the only distinction that counted in his sight was the distinction between righteousness and wickedness —a good man, though poor and humble, being acceptable to him; while a wicked man, though rich and mighty, was condemned and rejected by him. This ethical teaching of the Old Testament was renewed and intensified in the New Testament; and, most deeply impressed upon the world by the exalted and beautiful character of Jesus Christ,

it began to diffuse a new influence in the hearts of men, and to awaken a new sense of equality—a conception and feeling of equality which had never before existed. The slave and his master were alike children of a common Father, owning a common Savior, and inheriting a common hope of eternal life; therefore they were really brothers, and must live together in justice, kindness, and peace. So they worshiped in the same sanctuary, knelt before the same altar, and partook the same communion; and so "brotherly love" became the great, beautiful watchword of a new social order, binding the world "by gold chains about the feet of God."

Now nothing short of such a sublime spiritual conception and conviction could break the ancient tyranny of caste and class, and give inner hope and consecration to the individual soul. The power of the past was overwhelming; the world was held in the vise of custom solidified into law. The individual was merely a unit in a vast corporation, the State, to which his interests were entirely subordinate; and religion was largely a device for sanctioning the established order of things. Only an idea which lifted the individual above the world, centering his main interests in a Divine Government that cared for his personal welfare, and that might rectify and supersede the governments of earth, could deliver him from this matrix. Such was the task and service of the

faith which lay at the heart of the Bible. To quote from a recent writer:

The monotheistic idea of God, as the prophets conceived it, entailed an impassioned belief in human equality. Compare the Old Testament with Plato. The sacred nation in prophetic thought was in truth provincial. Beyond the frontiers of this one people the best things, for the most part, did not travel. Plato also was by reason of his exaltation of his own race provincial, quite as provincial as the prophets. But compare them as their thought and plan holds good over the territory they try to cover. Within Plato's commonwealth, while there are no castes in the technical sense, yet there are lines of separation drawn so clearly and with so much suggestion of permanence, that we are led into a thoroughgoing aristocratic view of things. But in the prophetic commonwealth all distinctions are removed. There's one God, one good, for all men. One capacity for receiving the good is ascribed to them all. Aggressive universalism inheres in prophetic monotheism. In it the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of men, are implicit.

Therefore the attempt to popularize monotheism was in itself a grand act of faith—faith in the sovereign value of the idea itself, faith also in the spiritual capacity of the common man. As plainly as human thoughts can express anything, did this undertaking proclaim an absolute conviction that the lowest classes were level to the highest knowledge, and that the constitution of our common humanity called for no mysteries that should be the prerogative of the few. And so the success that crowned the attempt to popularize monotheism was one of the great steps taken by history towards Democracy. For the unity of God draws after it the unity of the race and the unity of society. The logic of monotheism limps unless it brings up at last on the conception of a nation, a church, a humanity, within whose pale there are no distinctions save temporary and economic ones. The caste principle has no foothold anywhere within it.[8]

[8] Professor Henry S. Nash, *Genesis of the Social Conscience*, p. 84.

There surely have been many influences— of racial temperament, climate, political experiment, growing knowledge, invention, and widening intercourse—which have wrought through the long centuries toward the production of this fruit of the spirit, democracy, that is ripening in our time; but it is safe to say that, among them all, none has been so effectual as the ethical and religious faith expressed in the Bible, rooted and grounded in Hebrew monotheism, and flowering most perfectly in the teaching of Jesus Christ. The world is yet very far from realizing the full blessing of this precious fruitage; but it is slowly moving forward toward such a larger realization, and nothing so constantly sustains it in its patient, toilsome advance as the spiritual idealism enshrined in the sacred literature of Christendom, and forever palpitating as a living "Word of God" in the soul of every aspiring man.

5. It remains to be said that the Bible has contributed directly and immensely to spiritual progress by promoting the spiritualization of religion. A study of the world's history shows that religion has always been a powerful reality. Existing wherever man has existed, appearing in ages of darkness as well as those of light, and expressing itself in forms of superstition and fear quite as much as in those of intelligence and love, it has been a constant presence and a potent factor in the formation of character and the development

of civilization. Sometimes it has been productive of ill, and sometimes of good; now holding an individual, a race, a nation in the thraldom of ignorance and cruelty; and anon effecting the deliverance of such out of the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It has claimed the attention of all sorts and conditions of people, has allied itself with all sorts of interests, and has created or supported a large variety of institutions. Whether for weal or for woe, it has been a power which could never be permanently ignored; and today it is abroad in the earth exerting itself and doing its work as steadily and positively as the force of gravity. It is no myth, no product of a sick fancy, no child even of poesy; but rather a great, natural energy, whose seat is in the human soul, but whose source is hidden away in the depths of the Infinite. Man does not make himself religious, no church or sacrament makes him religious, nor is he made religious by any miracle save that greatest and most primitive of all miracles, the miracle of his creation as a spiritual being, the child of the living God. And because religion is thus native to man, a spiritual energy or life that is governed by its own absolute laws, nothing can entirely suppress it or perpetually withstand it; it must rise to its legitimate place of dignity and power in human development sooner or later; no man can be forever irreligious; no skepticism, no worldliness,

no ignorance, no wickedness can eternally alienate him from the life of God; and no society, no civilization can be permanently immoral and unspiritual.

Seeing thus the vast importance of religion as a vital force in our human world, we see at once that whatever influence may enlighten, elevate, and purify religion must greatly benefit mankind. A debased religion means a degraded manhood; an exalted religion means an ennobled manhood. Now the ideas, principles, and spirit which pervade the Bible tend most strongly to produce a pure and undefiled type of religion. To be sure, there are, in the earlier portions of the Old Testament especially, many crude, imperfect, essentially erroneous conceptions, which are the remains of a prevalent polytheism and a gross anthropomorphism; and even in the later portions there are endless rules and regulations for an elaborate ceremonialism which to us seem to militate against vital inspiration and growth. But, along with these shortcomings, there are the sublime thoughts about the one only and true God, Jehovah, about his righteousness and grace, about his inexorable government of the children of men, in justice and yet in mercy, which have in all generations helped powerfully to awaken a reverent faith and an ethical devotion; and the passion of this faith and devotion, flaming out in the utterances of the prophets, and singing or weeping in the piety of

the psalmists, has carried the hearts of unnumbered myriads of human beings into a seriousness and earnestness of feeling and endeavor which have glorified life with a new consecration. Then in the New Testament we find the defects of the older religious life largely outgrown; particularly in the teaching and character of Jesus we perceive the purest spirituality ever witnessed among men —intelligent, sane, balanced, sincere, chaste as the sunshine, ardent as love, stronger than death! This beautiful and mighty religion permeates all the writings in the New Testament, in spite of the limitations which characterized their several authors and have left their impress of error or weakness upon its pages. It glows like a heavenly light in the soul of every disciple, evangelist, or apostle who has been really touched by the spirit of his Master; and the countless hosts who, since the first days, have read this priceless literature have been awakened to a vision of spiritual life and character, of moral purity and loving service, of inner peace and joy which have been to them the one transcendent meaning and blessedness of their existence. Religion has been thus lifted up, purified, sanctified, and made to be a radiant experience of power in the heart,—an experience of faith, hope, and love—issuing in an outward life of benevolent activities. Millions of men and women, sharing in some degree such a spiritual experience, have made the world brighter and

warmer than it could possibly have been otherwise. Slowly the religion of the masses has become more vital, ethical, practical, hopeful; fear and gloom are at length beginning to vanish; a healthful, happy, beautiful piety is beginning to spring up; and all these fair results may be as surely attributed in part to the influence of the Bible, more especially the influence of the Christian portion of it, as the flowers that adorn the fields may be attributed largely to the sunshine.

The transformation of popular ideals and habits is an exceedingly slow process. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," indeed, but it necessarily does its work very gradually. It was comparatively easy to establish the Jewish church and the Christian Church as outward institutions; it was a vastly more difficult task to impregnate human society with the true spirit of Judaism and Christianity to such an extent as to quicken a new life in the heart of the individual, and to reform the terrible social abuses under which the world was groaning and travailing in pain. But the Bible has wrought patiently at this gigantic task; untold millions who have been reached by its influence during the passing centuries have not been touched wholly in vain; minds have been divinely enlightened, hearts have been softened, miseries have been alleviated; and, little by little, civilization has taken on a mildness, a sacredness,

and a benignance which would have been scarcely conceivable but for the vital inspiration of this wonderful literature. It has accomplished what no political or ecclesiastical government could ever accomplish—it has molded "the thoughts of the hearts" of mankind; and from this inmost center working outward, in the individual and in society, it has exerted a regenerative influence which has begun the establishment of a new dominion among men—the kingdom of Heaven on earth.

The deeper history of every period is not the history of wars and of empires, but rather the history of the inner, spiritual life of the race. As we have here caught a glimpse of the manner in which the Bible has at least partially conquered the paganism of antiquity and the barbarianism of the Middle Age; and as we see how at length, in our own day, it is finding its way into all languages, while it is better understood than ever before, and while popular education is spreading everywhere, so that it may be read and enjoyed by the waiting millions, we are encouraged to expect in the future a yet more marvelous demonstration than even the past has afforded of the great value of the Bible in relation to spiritual progress.

CHAPTER XI

THE SERVICE OF THE BIBLE TO OUR OWN TIME

Having glanced at the rôle which the Bible has played in the spiritual progress of the past, we need next to consider what service it may render to our own age. For we can by no means ignore the significant change that is taking place in the thought of men respecting the nature of the Sacred Volume; and if they are still to retain a vital interest in it, so as to read it with diligence and to derive substantial help from it, they must be enabled to see *why* they should thus submit themselves to its influence. One may, indeed, reverence and love it for the sake of what it has been to previous generations, whose culture he has in a measure inherited; but if one is to continue using it for himself, in such a way as to let it have real power over his life, and if he is to educate his children in its ideas and spirit, he must honor it for the sake of what it is *now* by understanding its present valid claims upon his attention. Accordingly an important specific task, urgently needing to be well performed, is to point out the positive value of the Bible, under the new general conception of its character, to the welfare of the individual and the progress of society *in our own time,* as we look forward along the various lines of an expanding civilization.

Two or three preliminary remarks deserve attention.

1. The fact that the Bible has exerted a potent influence in the past warrants the assumption that it possesses some great, enduring merit which will make it influential in the future. Experience is a safe guide here, as in other matters of moment. And assuredly experience abundantly proves the power of the Bible to quicken, inspire, enlighten, invigorate, comfort, moralize, and sanctify mankind to a degree matched by no other literature in the world. And in its career during the last two thousand years it has been tested among all sorts and conditions of men, not less the cultivated classes than the barbarian and the savage; it has traversed all areas of human life, from the most corrupt to the most saintly; and it has been translated into hundreds of languages and dialects, among all nations and tribes in all parts of the earth. Certainly the honor thus accorded it and the sway thus maintained by it justify us in believing that it has some unusual and permanent value that must render it vastly helpful to our own and coming generations, whatever changes of view it may undergo.

2. Careful reflection will show that the influence of the Bible in the past has not been mainly due to any particular theory which has been held regarding its origin. In other words, its power has not grown out of the fact that people have

called it "the Word of God;" but rather they have called it "the Word of God" because it has had such power over their souls. They have felt that it brought to them a divine message, making divine truth clear to them which was unknown or dimly guessed before; and so they have recognized its divine nature, and have claimed it as a divine revelation. But, all the while, it was not the theory that was the source of its power, but rather it was its power which gave rise to the theory. *Therefore we should not expect a change in the general theory by which the origin of the Bible is explained to weaken its moral and religious influence in the lives of those who study it; on the contrary, such a change as is now occurring is likely, in due time, to increase that influence, simply because a larger intelligence, when valid, leads to a truer and fuller appreciation.*

3. An increased knowledge of the Bible has nearly always been followed by a widespread spiritual quickening, and it is reasonable to believe that such will be the case now. In the days of Josiah, King of Judah, when the book of Deuteronomy was brought out and read to the people it made a profound impression and produced a revolution in their religious customs and moral conduct. When St. Jerome, in the fourth century, translated the Scriptures into the Latin, his work, although at first opposed, became in time the great literary medium by which the Roman

Church built itself up and transmitted to later times, with less perversion than would otherwise have occurred, the precious religious story intrusted to her keeping. When Erasmus, in the early years of the sixteenth century, published his edition of the Greek text of the New Testament, with an improved Latin translation and comments, it ran over Europe like wildfire, and aroused the people to an astonished sense of the richness of their Christian inheritance, from which they had been largely shut out. When, upon the heels of this enterprise, came Luther's noble rendering of the Bible into his native German tongue, the people devoured it with eagerness, and found it virtually a new revelation of divine truth; and it quickly became the bulwark of the Reformation. Yet again, when the first English versions were made, a similar hunger awaited them, and a similar popular effect was produced by them; and, indeed, everywhere "the open Bible" became the watchword of Protestantism, and has kept Protestantism alive and growing ever since. In view of these facts, not to cite others, we may confidently look for a vast spiritual uplift to result in the near future from the new learning of these days respecting the Scriptures, if only we make sure to embrace it, to use it aright, and to educate the people at large with reference to it.

Now if we inquire closely what are the salient

excellencies of the Bible which make it worthy of our most earnest study, and what is the peculiar service which it may render to our present civilization, we shall find a number of important points to be considered.

1. Obviously the first of these is the fact that it preserves the threefold story of the Israelitish people, the life and teaching of Jesus, and the work of the apostles in planting the Christian Church. What if there had been no literary record of these extremely significant things? What if we had been obliged to depend upon oral tradition, or even upon the authority of august institutions, for the transmission of such facts during two or three thousand years? We very well know what perversions and corruptions the truth about these selfsame matters has suffered *notwithstanding* our possession of this mass of literature, by which we are now learning to correct the vast traditionalism of nineteen centuries or more; and it is beyond all question that, without these priceless literary memorials, we should have no trustworthy account of that ancient, unique and inestimable history wherein the sublimest spiritual ideas and ideals of the present age originated. The value that tradition sometimes has may be freely granted, as may also the fact that the Christian Church antedates the written New Testament;[1] but this in nowise invalidates the

[1] Consult Professor E. C. Moore's extremely valuable work, *The New Testament in the Christian Church*, Macmillan, 1904.

contention that, with tradition alone, we should have been certain to wander far and wide from the truth of history and from the great lessons which it teaches us. For instance, what should we know, in a reliable way, of Greece and Rome but for the Greek and Roman classics? At least, how meager and tantalizing would be our gleanings from their archæological remains! Likewise, how dim would be the light that shines through the intervening ages from Egypt, Babylon, and Nineveh, if there had been no inscriptions on their long-buried monuments, now happily exhumed, to tell us their strange stories and to reveal the thoughts and imaginations of men's hearts in those times! Correspondingly, it is altogether probable that, without the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, the history of Israel, the life-work of Jesus, and the origin of the Christian Church would be to us like the memory of a great dream experienced long ago by our race, susceptible of no verification, and distorted into every conceivable shape through the loving amplifications and the selfish misconstructions to which human nature would have subjected them. When we duly measure the import of this consideration, we can scarcely be too thankful for the sacred literature that has preserved for us the most precious spiritual heritage which comes to us out of all the past.

2. The Bible reinforces and purifies the wor-

ship of mankind. We know that worship is one of the great facts of our human world; its universality and potency are recognized and understood by scholars today more fully than ever before. All nations, from the most primitive to the most cultivated, worship something; and nothing more surely influences conduct and character than does the outpouring of the soul in this sacred act. And a wide survey of the religious rites and ceremonies of our race shows us that worship is often grossly superstitious, sensual, and even cruel, accompanied by utterly false ideas, and imposing needless burdens of sacrifice and suffering upon the people. If we complain of priestcraft, even as it has been witnessed in Christian history, let us not forget that it is well-nigh a universal disease, from which no people, not even a people claiming enlightenment, has been wholly free.

Now the tremendous influence of the Bible, wherever it makes itself felt, not only increases worship but spiritualizes it. It quickens and strengthens the instinct of worship which is native to the human soul, because its writers were full of the spirit of devout aspiration—so full, indeed, that, in this far-subsequent time even, we can hardly find any language so suitable to voice our praise and thanks, our trust and love, our desire to consecrate ourselves to some divine purpose, as the strong words of Holy Writ; and so it comes to pass that the Bible helps to rear tem-

ples and gather pious congregations in all lands and among all peoples whither it finds its way. It also tends positively to make worship a living thing, not formal, perfunctory, hollow. Perhaps it does not entirely succeed in this; perhaps, indeed, nothing can wholly keep us from lifeless conventionalism; for we easily fall into conventional ways in nearly everything—in conversation, manners, politics, education, and even art. But the Bible is the most potent safeguard against conventionalism in religion, and the best promoter of vitality therein, which we possess excepting the Spirit of the living God. It makes us feel that we must worship in spirit and truth, because the Being whom it presents for our adoration *is* Spirit; it exalts all our conceptions of the Holy One that inhabiteth eternity; and it constrains every soul to come before him in humility and purity, yet in loving gratitude and gladness. Thus it ennobles, sanctifies, and glorifies human worship as probably no other single agency could do; and this altogether by virtue of the cleansing, invigorating currents of spiritual influence which it pours into our inevitably religious life, even when accepted as a purely human literature.

3. Again, the Bible brings the individual soul to itself in a way which is equaled by no other instrumentality. The deep spirit that pervades the Scriptures finds the deep places in each life. It seems to speak directly to *you* and *me,* to have a

message for every heart. The Bible magnifies the importance of the individual human soul by making every man feel that he sustains a personal relation to God, that God deals with him as an accountable being, and loves him as a son. And can we measure the significance of this single, sublime truth? Here we are in an infinite universe, of unfathomable mystery. How strange it is; how overwhelming at times! What are we but atoms? No wonder that men sometimes think of themselves as "the small dust of the balance," and "altogether lighter than vanity"! No wonder, then, that they sometimes throw their lives away! But the Bible teaches them that their lives are precious in the sight of God; that all this mystery is understood by him; and that the whole material universe is but the vesture and theater for the working-out of his plans for these very children of men. Ah, how that conception changes everything! How it helps us to find ourselves in this vast wilderness—yea, even to find ourselves *at home* in it! "We are sons of God; and if sons, then heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ!" And "if God be for us, who can be against us?" Such is a hint of the way in which the Bible brings the human soul to itself by bringing it to its Heavenly Father, and thereby saves it from its sense of loneliness, of orphanage, in this immense and often-seemingly cruel universe.

Does one need to say that this sense of the divine solicitude carries with it somewhat of the sense of sin, and also the sense of forgiveness? When the Bible makes us feel that we are children of God, it makes us feel that we ought to act as such. This means that the voice of conscience, bidding us do right and be true, or reproving us for wrong and falsehood, is recognized as God's prompting or restraining Spirit in the soul; and thus we come to feel ourselves more keenly responsible for every word or deed Therefore the whole of life, all our personal conduct, even the inmost thought of the heart, takes on a new sacredness: we are in God's world, God sees us, we cannot get away from his loving yet rebuking Spirit; and so sin becomes a frightful reality, and righteousness a higher and a glorious reality. Thus we come to understand what life means in its ethical aspects, and the Voice that speaks to us out of the Bible forever echoes and reinforces the voice of our own hearts: "Be ye holy, for I am holy;" "this do, and thou shalt live."

4. Once more, the Bible directly and powerfully promotes the welfare of society. By magnifying the importance of the individual and making his life more sacred, it improves the social units. If you were going to build a brick wall, one of the prime conditions of your success in building a good wall would be that each brick

should be a good one. No more can a satisfactory social order be established without right-minded, sound-hearted men and women. Make each man intelligent, honest, free, fearless, unselfish, consecrated, and society will be just, pure, and prosperous. Because, therefore, the Bible deals primarily with the individual soul in such a way as to ennoble it, the Bible ministers immediately and vitally to the social welfare. And we shall never get beyond this method of trying to improve the race, no matter what rearrangements of government and industry we may make. Systems of social philosophy which ignore this truth are bound to go to pieces very speedily.

And yet the Bible deals most effectually with men in a distinctively social capacity. There is no literature that drives home to people more forcibly a sense of their social relationships and responsibilities. Notwithstanding the vein of independence in the natural character of the early Hebrews, their ethical spirit and their religious devotion carried them into such unity under their theocratic government that at last it was the nation as a whole, or the purified remnant saved from the disasters of centuries, that became the servant of Jehovah; and he, a God of righteousness, required of them the practice of righteousness among their fellow-men at every step in their long career of suffering and discipline. This mighty moral energy expressed itself in the

utterances of the prophets, who denounced social wickedness as strongly as they condemned idolatry; and as we read those trenchant messages today, we feel that the same holy spirit rebukes all *our* social injustices and oppressions, and calls *us* likewise to obey the moral law as the very first condition of social prosperity. When we pass over to the New Testament and grasp its great doctrine of the divine Fatherhood, and see its corollary of human brotherhood, and listen to the Golden Rule, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, and all the injunctions of charity, justice, and kindness, we are impressed still more deeply with the binding force of our social obligations, constraining us to live in righteousness, peace, and helpfulness with all mankind. In fact, it is not too much to claim that, outside of the human conscience itself, no agency or influence promotes social justice, social order, social stability, social freedom, social happiness, and social progress so directly, potently and widely as the great teachings and spirit of the Bible. This may seem extravagant language, but wherein should it be qualified?

An illustration may serve to fix the lesson here taught: The transformation of pig-iron into Bessemer steel involves a *structural improvement* in the material through the combustion or expulsion, by fire and air, of the impurities contained in the crude ore—the sulphur, the silicon, the ex-

cess of carbon, etc. So the transformation of society into the kingdom of heaven involves a *structural improvement* in the human race; and programmes for social betterment, however ingenious, must wait upon such an improvement, to a large extent, for their execution or success. Because the influence of the Bible tends vitally to effect precisely such a structural improvement in human character, the Bible promotes both individual development and social advancement most surely and extensively. The world will have need of this influence long after many utopian schemes have fascinated, failed, and disappeared.

5. Finally, the various merits indicated in the foregoing account culminate in the witness which the Bible bears to the spiritual realities of the universe and of man's life in it, and in the spiritualizing influence which it thus exerts upon our whole civilization. The struggle between the flesh and the spirit, between the things of the body and the interests of the soul, is the perpetual struggle of humanity. Perhaps it was never more severe than at present. The increase of material commodities has stimulated physical desire, multiplying or extending wants beyond the possibility of immediate satisfaction; and the result is, for the time being at least, a widespread discontent, an oppressive sense of failure because wealth is not accumulated for each, and a grow-

ing tendency to believe that might makes right in the domain of social and industrial life. All this is aggravated for many minds by the supposition that a materialistic philosophy of the universe is warranted by the disclosures of modern science —a supposition due mainly to the undigested knowledge thrown upon contemporary thought.

Now the only effectual offset to such an attitude is a vital and profound spiritual reassurance, helping men to feel that they are spiritual beings, that mind is more than matter, that character is greater than riches, that morality is something vastly higher and more substantial than brute force and shrewdness, and that human destiny is far more glorious than an extinction of the soul when the body is buried in the earth. This reassurance is afforded by the Bible through its awakening influence upon all the spiritual susceptibilities of human nature; it arouses conscience, it quickens aspiration, it inculcates the sublime conception of a Divine Government, universal and eternal, established in righteousness, inflexible and unwearied; and it instils a spirit of love and hope that both ennobles and encourages the mind amid its hard, baffling circumstances. Thus it emphasizes character, exalts the ideal, enjoins the seeking of excellence rather than wealth or even happiness, and so strengthens faith in the slow but sure triumph of truth and justice as to inspire an unswerving devotion

to duty and an all-conquering patience in good works. Superadding to the motives and considerations prompting worthy conduct, which may be drawn from "the life that now is," the transcendent inducements yielded by the belief in "the life that is to come," it deepens the conviction that man has a place of permanence, of dignity, and of ultimate victory in God's universe, and thereby sustains him in all his conflicts by filling his soul with "the power of an endless life." Then the things of time and sense drop into their proper rank of subordination, while the interests of mind and heart are appraised at their true value; then life takes on its due symmetry; a clear, high purpose defines all earnest endeavor, and serenity and strength come at last to reward the consecration of a human spirit made in the likeness of God and seeking to do God's will.

If the Bible imbues individual men and women with this resolute and holy sense of their nature and their mission, it must surely touch all phases of their life and of the civilization which they help to mold with a spiritual glory that is of priceless worth. And surely our present civilization waits for just such a spiritualization. Its industry, its wealth, its learning and art must be transmuted into character and joy ere it can reach the full fruition of the labor and suffering which have produced it. Neither sensualism, whether refined or coarse, for the individual, nor

turmoil for society, can be the ultimate goal of human development; every noble instinct in us cries out for something better, and all good influences must work on for the realization of that "something better," however tedious may seem the process. Among these good influences that which emanates from the ideas, principles, and spirit of the Bible is one of the highest and strongest and tends most thoroughly to spiritualize all the interests and activities of mankind.

> There is something in the social atmosphere created by a widely diffused acquaintance with the Scriptures, which moderates the acerbity of economic strife, shames the arrogant selfishness of prosperity, and mitigates the embittered resentments of want. Far better than intermittent disquisitions from a supreme ecclesiastical authority is the stamping indelibly on the public conscience of that conception of human duty which is expressed in the gospel. This great service to peace and to social reformation is rendered by the Bible in the familiar usage of the people.[3]

In claiming so much as the foregoing pages assert respecting the service of the Bible to our own age, it is not meant to imply that *everything* in the Bible must be regarded as good and helpful. On the contrary, we must frankly admit that *much* in the Scriptures is below the intellectual, moral, and religious level of our time. So palpable is this truth, when fairly considered, and so harmful may be a misunderstanding and mis-

[3] Canon Hensley Henson, *Contemporary Review, April*, 1904.

use of the Bible, that Count Leo Tolstoy, one of the loftiest spirits of our day, is led to exclaim:

> People talk of harmful books! But is there in Christendom a book that has done more harm to mankind than this terrible book, called "Scripture History from the Old and New Testaments"? And all the men and women of Christendom have to pass through a course of this Scripture History during their childhood, and this same history is also taught to ignorant adults as the first and most essential foundation of knowledge—as the one, eternal truth of God.[8]

It is manifest, however, that the indictment here brought is occasioned, not by the Bible as a whole, but by the primitive and crude conceptions contained in some parts of it, and still more by the misinterpretation and abuse to which the Book has been subject. The indictment cannot stand a moment against such a conception and use of the Scriptures as the present writer is earnestly seeking to recommend; indeed, it only serves to emphasize the need of so educating the people as to enable them to see very clearly that the Bible is *not* all of one piece, and that the crudities and errors of early Hebrew thought are *not* to be elevated into equal importance with the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Then they will see that those crudities and errors—intellectual, moral, religious—have been like the ways and stays for the launching of a ship—necessary, but temporary; or they have served to

[8] See the whole article, "Leo Tolstoy's Appeal to the Clergy," *Open Court* (Chicago), August, 1903.

develop the great spiritual truths of the gospel, even as the corn-stalk serves to produce the ripened ear, being no longer needed after the fruit is gathered.

While holding fast to all that has been said in appreciation of the service of the Bible to our own age, it will be well to remember that it is possible to depend too exclusively upon the Bible. For the Bible, at best, brings us a message out of the past. But we are living in the present, our interests are in the present, and *God is in the present.* Life is sacred here and now; the human soul has its daily experience in great, eternal spiritual principles; the truth which ancient prophet and apostle taught we ourselves may find and prove if we will. Let man speak today—man the child of God, capable of hearing God's voice and of knowing God's will; let the *present* power of the Divine Spirit be felt, moving the soul of man to new insights and new achievements *now.* Then this living experience will be the clearest light in which the Bible may be read, and the surest proof of its holy lessons; and the Bible in turn will become chiefly a great instrument for awakening the spiritual susceptibilities of the soul, for attuning the inward ear, in order that it may hear the more distinctly the voice of the Lord God. Thus daily life and the Bible will act and react upon each other, supplement each other, and correct or confirm each other. Thus

the Bible will render the highest of all its services to our own age by helping to put each one of us into a deeper conscious harmony and co-operation with Divine Providence amid the toils and conflicts of the present generation. So shall we find that

> The present moves attended
> With all of brave and excellent and fair
> That made the old time splendid.

CHAPTER XII

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE IN ITS MODERN ASPECTS

Having obtained a clear conception of the revolution which is taking place in the thought of intelligent people regarding the nature of the Bible; and having tried to form a just estimate of the great service which the Sacred Volume has rendered to the interests of spiritual progress in the past, is still rendering at present, and is bound to render yet more largely in the future if we be not unfaithful to it, we are now prepared to consider the immediately practical question: How shall we seek to use this precious literature in order that it may most truly help us? How shall we read it for our personal profit? How shall we teach it to our children? How shall we employ it in the church and Sunday school? And what place, if any, shall we give it in our so-called secular education? Evidently this question is of such moment as to demand the plainest, most careful, most candid answer that can be given it. One may well approach the task with diffidence, and yet with a serious resolution to express with perfect frankness the truth which he is sure ought to be uttered.

1. Perhaps the very first thing to be said is, *that we are not to be afraid of the truth.* Every

enlightened person ought by this time to have been emancipated from all such fear. Yet the real timidity of many minds shows the need of reassurance. A kind of superstition still lingers in the realm of religious thought, though banished from nearly every other. But slowly the influence of growing knowledge will dispel its last vestiges, and men will learn that they are not to dread the discovery of *truth* in any domain. For when we consider how modern physical science has opened the material universe to our view, at each successive stage disclosing new and marvelous truths which have been found in due time to establish a larger and grander harmony with all other certainly known truths. we must have the utmost confidence that Truth is the one substantial reality in the universe, that Truth is of God, and that therefore every iota of truth is to be welcomed, whencesoever it may come. To beget such a confidence in our minds, and to inform and train us so that we can distinguish between truth and error, are the chief ends of all our intellectual discipline. There can be no wholesome, happy study and growth in religion without this freedom.

We are, then, first of all, to be open-minded and unafraid. The universe is overwhelmingly vast, mysterious, rich, glorious. It cannot possibly be that any man, or any church or book, at any time in the past, has gathered up all that is

to be known about it, or even about any portion of it. Forever it is to be expected that there is yet more light to break forth. Therefore we are to be students, learners, at once humble and bold; proving all things, holding fast that which is good; willing to be corrected, but thoughtful, careful, and above all sincere. If we approach the Bible in this attitude, we shall find our doubts, perplexities, and anxieties giving way to increasing illumination, growing knowledge, and deepening satisfaction.

2. Perhaps the next thing to be said is, that, for the general reader, especially if past the period of youth, *there is need of a simple Introduction to the Study of the Bible,* containing a clear sketch of its external history, a plain account of the traditional view of it, an explanation of the development of the modern view, an indication of the real but great value of this ancient literature, and a trustworthy guide to a correct method in reading it. There are, to be sure, numerous *Introductions* of an elaborate and scholarly character that have served in theological seminaries and for advanced students; but, mostly, they are unsuitable for popular use, and too often are vitiated by the old and invalid conception of the nature of the Bible. Such a handbook as is here proposed is admirably supplied, as far as it goes, in Professor Walter F. Adeney's little book entitled *How to Read the Bible;*[1] but

[1] New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1897.

it does not cover quite so much ground as is desirable, though it deserves to be in the hands of every parent and Sunday-school teacher. Doubtless the more complete treatment of the introductory matter required will be forthcoming ere long; and even now, if one is really interested to study—and not much can be done for anyone who is not really interested—there is an abundance of instructive, explanatory material, which may serve to guide the reader of the Scriptures to an understanding of their origin, history, character, value, and best uses. The main thing needed by each person, after all, is a genuine desire to get the message and the blessing which the Bible contains.

3. Another general fact to be borne in mind is, *that a proper comprehension of the Bible demands considerable information respecting its historical origin.* Let not this remark frighten anyone. It does not mean that every man must be an erudite scholar in order to derive any benefit or enjoyment from the Sacred Writings, for such an implication would be far from the truth. Neither does it mean that the great, heart-searching utterances in which the Scriptures abound cannot make themselves felt with impressive power and helpfulness even to the uneducated, so true to life in all its deeper experiences are they. Rather, the thought is that, taking up the Bible as literature, we are to remember that it is an

ancient literature; produced by a people of antiquity who lived within a definite historical environment; and bearing, therefore, the indelible stamp of the social, national, and international setting, and of the prevalent ideas, beliefs, and aspirations, which belonged to the age or ages that yielded it. Accordingly we need to know something about all these facts and circumstances, at least in a general way; and there is so much more to be known now than formerly concerning that remote past, partly long-buried, that not only is such intelligence at once more necessary and more accessible, but it is also more interesting and enjoyable, than heretofore; and consequently ignorance is the less excusable.

Of course the extent of the knowledge to be thus sought must depend a little on what you read the Bible for. If you are reading mainly for spiritual quickening and comfort, for devotional purposes, you will not need so much of this historical information as if studying expressly to ascertain the meaning of the various biblical authors in the light of their times and conditions. Still, in any case, without a reasonable understanding of the character of the peculiar soil in which the Bible grew, you will be liable to wander into the widest and wildest vagaries in seeking to interpret and apply its teachings. What misconstructions of the Prophets, for example, have resulted from failure in this regard! The

story of the misuse and abuse of the Bible, the wresting and perversion of its contents, the building-up of vast systems of half-truths, is a long and sorry one; and the only sure corrective of them and protection against them, one and all, is the thorough historical knowledge here contended for.

4. The next advice to be given is *to approach the Bible frankly as a human literature.* Let all thought of its divine character, of its containing "the Word of God," wait. If it really possesses a divine character, it will speak for itself: let it speak, let it make its own impression. If it contains a message from God, can we not trust God to make himself heard? At any rate, as has been frequently remarked, whatever else the Bible may be, or may be thought to be, it comes to us as literature first of all—as a work in human language, growing out of the deep and varied experiences of human souls, full of the lights and shadows of human hope and fear, joy and sorrow, love and hate, goodness and wickedness. Let it be taken up and read simply as such. If God is in it, he will find us. If the great spirit of the Bible is the Spirit of the Divine Life, our hearts will soon know it; and it is far better to *feel* God in the Bible, in the world, in our lives, than to have him too much pointed out and explained to us. Just read the Bible as you read the Book of Nature—contemplate it, feel it,

yield yourself up to its influence, learn to love it, caress it, and let its mighty heart-beat reach your soul: you will quickly find that it speaks to you as no other literature does, and fills you with a strength you have not gained in any other way. Then, after much experience in such communion with the spirit of the Bible, formulate—if you wish—your thought or theory of the inspiration and the revelation contained in its hallowed pages. When you come to do this you will avail yourself of the thought of others, and will seek all the information you can appropriate to enlighten and validate your own conception. The great advantage of this method will be found to consist in the production of fresh, natural ideas and convictions, growing out of original, personal experience under the impression made by the Bible itself, rather than a set of notions and beliefs taken on from other men's experiences and theories, with which you suppose your own must be made to square.

Following these general counsels, a few specific directions may be properly given.

a) *It is not best to try to read the Bible through by rote.* That is the old-fashioned way, and, of course, it is far better than no way at all; moreover it is consistent enough with the traditional conception of the nature of the Bible. But it is not consistent with the new conception, and entails a needless waste of time and energy.

What we want to get out of the Bible mainly is its great spirit, its potent influence, its sublime teaching; and we shall most quickly and surely do this by taking the salient portions and grasping the underlying, pervading truths that run through the Scriptures like threads of gold in the warp and woof of some antique tapestry. Read the Pentateuch, Joshua, Judges, the Samuels, and the Kings for the historical narratives of the Old Testament—read them at first without any reference to the analysis into their component parts; and later read them in their analyzed form, as given in Professor W. E. Addis' *Documents of the Hexateuch,* or in Professor Charles Foster Kent's *The Student's Old Testament.*[2] Read the Psalms for the devotional spirit; read the Prophets for the spirit of patriotism and religious faith and fortitude; read the gospels, of course, for the beautiful life-story of Jesus, and for his heavenly teaching; read the Acts for the narrative of the planting of the Christian Church; read the epistles of Paul and John and Peter for spiritual inspiration, admonition, and comfort. Read for nourishment as well as for information; and therefore read what you are hungry for, what really feeds you—different portions at different times.

b) Another important direction is, *to read the*

[2] Logically and chronologically arranged and translated, Scribner, 1904.

Bible in generous allotments. Unfortunately, we have fallen into the practice of reading only detached and very small fragments, selected from various books in a series of very slightly related passages, that can scarcely fail to confuse and bewilder adults as well as children. It has been a baneful method, breaking up all sense of wholeness or continuity in contemplating any given writing in the Bible; and to it must be ascribed no small part of the lack of real knowledge and real appreciation of the literary structure of the Sacred Volume, of which we hear frequent complaints today as prevailing even among college students and many church people. We cannot too quickly begin to counteract the evil by teaching the young to read the Bible itself, instead of lesson leaves, and also to read long or large portions of the Scriptures continuously. For example, let the entire story of Joseph be read at one or two, not more than three, sittings; the story of the plagues in Egypt and the flight of the Israelites, at a single sitting; and the account of the conquest of Canaan under Joshua, in perhaps a couple of sittings. Likewise, from the New Testament, let a number of chapters from the gospels be read at a stretch, taking Mark first; follow with the book of Acts in the same way; and take extended sections of the great epistles, and of the shorter epistles read the whole at a time. In this way some sense of

totality, of literary continuity and comprehensiveness in each production, will be acquired. Better still, we shall thus be likely to read the Bible enough to be *saturated* with its noble thought and spirit, which is the main thing, after all, for us to seek.

This rule becomes especially urgent if one is to gain any just notion of the peculiarities of the different biblical writers—their characteristics of style, their ruling ideas, their points of view. For they are not all alike in these respects. There is a wide dissimilarity between Deuteronomy and Job, for example, or between Isaiah and Ecclesiastes; and, in the New Testament, between Mark and John, or between Luke and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Now a large part of the profit in reading the Bible lies in appreciating the real distinctions thus appearing in its various books—in understanding the actual qualities which make Paul's writings different from those of any other author, or which render the Gospel and the letters of John unique, or which put a stamp of individuality upon the books of Chronicles. Both the intellectual and the religious benefits accruing are sure to be greater under such intelligent discrimination than under the old notion of uniformity. I can respond to the spiritual sublimity of II Isaiah more earnestly when I know it as a different work from I Isaiah, and thus know its historical origin and its characteristics, than when

supposing the whole book which bears the name of Isaiah, consisting of sixty-six chapters, to be one and the same work, by one and the same author. So I can derive much greater help from Paul when I understand him as Paul than when I thoughtlessly assume him to be just like John or Peter or James. The remark applies generally throughout the Scriptures. The interest of the reader will be heightened, his moral perception will be sharpened, and his religious insight will become deeper and clearer when he is taught to observe real distinctions in this varied literature than if allowed to reduce it all to one common level.

c) A good practical rule also is *to read various translations.* Happily we now have several of these in the English language. If you desire to read for intellectual as well as for moral and religious profit, it will be well to begin with the American Revision, on account of its accuracy, its proper paragraphing, its indication of quotations and of poetic forms, and its use of the word "Jehovah" in the Old Testament, in place of the word "Lord," for the name of the Hebrew deity. If you are reading for devotional purposes mainly, and love the old forms of expression, read the Authorized Version, noble and impressive in its somewhat antique yet stately idiom. If you wish to understand the historical occasions of the production of some of the books of the

Old Testament, read the paraphrases in the series of volumes by Professors Sanders and Kent, entitled *Messages of the Bible;* or if you want to understand the scholarly analysis of the Old Testament books into their component parts, take the new series of volumes already referred to, entitled *The Student's Old Testament,* by Professor Kent.[3] It is interesting and often instructive to read the Psalms as given in the *Book of Common Prayer,* in the translation made by Miles Coverdale in 1535. In the New Testament, if one desires a fresh, vivid rendering, in the language of today, he may find much value in *The Twentieth Century New Testament.* The gospels as here printed show their fragmentary character very clearly. The work has been used with great advantage in Sunday-school classes of children from ten to thirteen years of age; the boys and girls were intensely interested in the story of Paul's life and work, as well as in the broken sketches of the Master's career. For children also an admirable work is *The Bible for Children,*[4] comprising nearly all the portions of Scripture, from both Testaments, which are really suitable for the young to read, and furnished in most attractive typographical form. An excellent series of paraphrases of the leading Old Testament stories, chosen for their value in the

[3] The first volume of this splendid work has just come to hand as these pages are being written (1904).

[4] Published by the Century Company, 1902.

moral education of the young, is the small volume of *Bible Stories,* by Mr. Walter L. Sheldon.[5]

By employing such a variety of translations, the individual reader or the class may easily acquire much important knowledge about the structure of the Bible, and by comparing one rendering with another may often gain a better conception of the meaning and the teaching of a given passage than could possibly be obtained in any other way. This method is preferable to the use of commentaries, because it trains the reader to ascertain what the Bible really says, and to let it speak for itself and make its own impression. Thus it enhances both interest and profit.

d) A caution may be properly given, *to beware of the interpreters of the Bible who appear to be infallible, and who build complete and final systems of science or philosophy or theology out of it.* Their name has been legion, and in the past they have wrought gross perversions; indeed, the bane of biblical interpretation has nearly always been just this passion for system-building. Fortunately, it is now beginning to weaken, under the influence of the New Learning, and consequently we shall soon witness the collapse of some stupendous, time-honored schemes of doctrine. Yet others may arise to take their place, as even our own age abundantly warns us; for Adventism still lingers, and Christian Science

[5] 1902 (W. M. Welch & Co., Chicago).

grows apace. But the whole tendency to build such systems, which was fostered by the old conception of the Bible, is utterly discouraged by the new conception; and in proportion as the reader apprehends the new view, and learns to use the Bible in the new way, he will find himself safeguarded against being swept off his feet by any ambitious, comprehensive scheme, claiming to be the one sure key to unlock the mystery of the Scriptures and reveal the meaning of the universe, and promising the complete redemption of the world.

e) A suggestion worth considering, by ministers especially, is *to give interpretative Bible readings*. If a minister is fairly educated in the modern view of the Scriptures, and is a good reader, he can greatly interest, instruct, and spiritually help his people by giving them occasionally, in classes or groups, extended readings with very brief explanatory introductions and comments. For instance, if he desires to illustrate the literary beauty of the Bible, let him read the book of Ruth in this manner; or the entire story of Joseph; or the account of the relations and the friendship of David and Jonathan. To illustrate the moral sublimity of the Scriptures, take those parts of Deuteronomy which Professor Moulton calls "The Orations of Moses," using the little volume *Deuteronomy* in "The Modern Reader's Bible;" or take selections from I Isaiah or II

Isaiah, or, indeed, almost any of the Prophets. To illustrate the religious power of the Bible, one may turn naturally to the Psalms; or to the parables of Jesus; or to some of the earnest appeals in Paul's epistles. Here is a sample of a single reading from the gospels, as once given by the present writer, with much satisfaction, as a part of his Lenten work:

BIBLE READING I

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK

(From the *Twentieth Century New Testament.*)

1. Brief Introduction.
   a) Author.
   b) Date—65–75 A. D.
   c) Characteristics:
      1) Simplicity.
      2) Mainly narrative.
      3) Graphic, vivid style.
      4) Frequent mention of casting out evil spirits.
2. The Reading:
   Chap. i—vii. 12. The early work in Galilee.
3. Further Reading:
   vii. 23—chap. ix.

The above is merely a hint of what may easily be done, to the profit of both reader and hearer. Another instructive reading from the gospels may be made from Luke ix. 51—xix. 27, containing what Professor Adeney styles "Luke's New Contribution to the Gospel History"—although the material is extensive enough for two or perhaps three readings.

Professor Richard G. Moulton has given, in a single evening, an interpretative reading of the book of Job, which has been illuminating, interesting, and religiously impressive to his auditors. Others have done similar work even more extensively; and there is no good reason why an intelligent pastor might not employ such a means for the intellectual and spiritual culture of his people.

In addition to the foregoing practical counsels and suggestions, it remains only to urge two serious thoughts.

1. *Read the Bible diligently.* Do not discard it wholly for the newspaper, the magazine, or the modern book. Do not neglect it. Read it privately; read it freely; read it both for instruction and for spiritual enrichment. It is one of the world's great classics—taken all in all, it is justly regarded as the world's greatest literature. No one can afford to go without its quickening, restraining, guiding, comforting, sanctifying influence. Let it have its due place of honor and power in each life and in each home. It will abundantly repay the esteem and devotion accorded it by hallowing all thought and affection, and by helping the human soul to realize its divine mission.

2. *But let the light of truth from any and all other sources blend with the light that shines from the pages of the Bible.* Stupendous developments have taken place since these ancient

Scriptures were produced. Greece and Rome have transmitted and diffused their respective legacies; the nations of modern Europe have arisen; the Protestant Reformation has occurred; America has sprung up here in the West; science has been born with its own new and glorious revelation of God's works and ways; and at length the gates are unbarred in every land, and the heralds of truth are entering into every corner of the earth, and "the people that sat in darkness have seen a great light."

All these significant events and achievements have their ministry for our minds and hearts; they all bring us messages from out the wondrous Book of Human Life; and we must seek to understand them aright, and to let them modify as they must the peculiar and most valuable teaching which it has been the mission of the Chosen People of old to give the world. We may rest assured that all that is true in the Bible is in harmony with all other truth, and is permanent. While many of the historical accidents and incidents of these venerable Writings must be allowed to fall away, as of a transient character and service, yet the living and mighty spirit that throbs through them will still pulsate side by side with all other good influences, will still thrill our souls with the power of the Divine Life, bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and will thus continue to guide our feet into the way of peace.

CHAPTER XIII

THE USE AND ABUSE OF THE BIBLE IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

Among the practical problems involved in the new views of the Bible which modern learning compels us to take none is in greater need of serious consideration than the one here propounded. It brings up the whole subject of the moral and religious education of the young, the function of the Sunday school in subserving this high interest, the value of the Holy Scriptures as an instrument therefor, and especially the right and wrong ways in which they may be employed. It is apparent at once that the large and vital questions thus raised open room for wide differences of opinion, and that the judgment which any man may render must be colored by his personal temperament, his experience, and his convictions regarding human nature, true religion, educational processes, and the peculiar conditions and requirements of the age in which he lives. The utmost I can hope for is a careful and candid statement, with perhaps a few particular applications, of those leading ideas and principles which I believe to furnish a valid guidance for parents and teachers who desire to do wisely and well their human part in the very delicate and important work of shaping the spiritual development of

the children committed to them a little while for nurture and instruction.

At the outset we need to understand that the real end to be sought in all our moral and religious dealings with the young is, or should be, the very thing which I have just mentioned—spiritual development. To be sure, this is precisely one of the points at which some of those differences of opinion to which I have alluded are bound to occur: one man will say that our business with our children is simply to make good Roman Catholics of them; another, good Episcopalians; another, good Universalists; another, good Christian Scientists; and still another, good citizens. But I should say that each of these results is too narrow, if the human soul is spiritual and immortal, with a capacity for growth to which we cannot set limits, and if also the spirit of liberty means anything great and potent. Holding such a view of man's nature, and of the worth of freedom in his life, I cannot doubt that the true goal which God sets before him, and which parents and teachers are to have in mind for their children, is the full, harmonious, continuous development of all the potential good that lies wrapped up within one of these mysterious beings that we dare believe to have been made in the divine image. None of us can say how vast, rich, manifold such a development may be; we are entirely warranted in believing that the pos-

sibilities of every soul for noble attainment far surpass our highest ideals; and if we could look upon each human child as Jesus Christ looked upon men, knowing "what was in man," we should undoubtedly cherish a more sublime faith, hope, and love for each than we have ever dreamed.

Conceiving thus the best spiritual development of which human nature is susceptible as the real and inclusive object of moral and religious education, we need also to understand that such a development may be promoted, such an education supplied, in a variety of ways. The home, the so-called secular school, general reading, the influence of society at large, the influence of nature, the work of life, the deep promptings of the spirit of man, the holy aspirations and beautiful ideals that lift and lure the soul, the joys and sorrows that the years inevitably bring, the sins, contritions, and retributions of which all have some experience, and chiefly "the inspiration of the Almighty"—these are some of the means which may contribute to the unfolding of the divine potentialities of the human being; and I often think that they constitute the principal means, after all, for what President Hyde has well called "God's education of man."

But we are next to note that the Christian Church is a powerful agency that aims directly and specifically at the same great result—the spir-

itual development of mankind. And the Christian Church has established, in these modern times, the institution of the Sunday school to serve still more particularly in this capacity for the moral and religious education of the young. How far this modern institution in the church really fulfils a valuable function,[1] what are its palpable defects, how these may be remedied, or what other agency may be substituted for the school as now ordinarily conducted—these are grave questions, but they cannot be properly

[1] The following trenchant criticism of the Sunday school, taken from an epitomized report of a sermon by the Reverend C. F. Aked (Baptist), published in the London *Christian World*, July 7, 1904, indicates the gravity of the question:

"He expresses his doubt as to whether there is a Sunday school in Great Britain which is efficient. Nearly always (he says) the premises are inadequate. The funds are inadequate. The teaching staff is inadequate. The books are inadequate. The actual teaching is inadequate. Everything is inadequate about it. The Sunday school is the home of reaction and obscurantism. Thoughts which have been rejected by every educated pulpit in every denomination in the country are taught in the Sunday school, for the children to unlearn as soon as they listen to the first street-corner sceptic. Usually the best people in the churches do not come into the Sunday schools. Those with the most money, and therefore able to help in many kindly ways; those with the best homes, and able to invite there the children who have less home life of their own; those with most leisure, and therefore able to take a personal interest in the welfare of each child; those with best education and with trained ability refuse to enter the doors of the Sunday school. Perhaps 20 per cent. of the teaching staff of the Sunday schools of the country may be drawn from these more favored classes. Not less than 80 per cent. has been made up of the humbler workers. For them, all honor and all praise! 'I know no Christian worker whom I hold in higher honour. They do their work under every disadvantage; their rewards are long in coming; their praise is not of men. All honour to them! But their honour is the shame of men and women better qualified to do their work. Do you wonder that the Sunday school is a problem?'"

treated here. It must be assumed that the Sunday school is in the great majority of our churches to stay for the present, and probably for a long time.

Now the Sunday school uses the Bible as its chief tool in prosecuting its work. It uses other tools also—service-books, song-books, lesson papers, and explanatory material, pictures, maps, story papers, library books, festival occasions, and above all living officers and teachers, who speak out of their real lives and characters, for good or ill; but all these subordinate tools are related to the great tool, the Bible, are imbued more or less with its ideas and spirit, and are designed to inculcate its wonderful truths.

Why do we give the Bible such a predominant place in the work of the Sunday school? It will be worth while to answer this question carefully. And of course the comprehensive answer is: Because we have derived our religious conceptions and convictions mainly from this Sacred Volume. Nearly all we know about Christianity and its mother-religion Judaism has reached us, directly and indirectly, through these Holy Scriptures; and it is certain that our best impulses, our noblest beliefs, and our purest affections are continually nourished and strengthened from the same great source. So true is this that I suppose not one person in a thousand, in our own part of the world, ever imagines that we should have any

religion at all if it were not for the Bible. But I have asked the question: "Why do we give the Bible such a predominant place in the work of the Sunday school?" exactly for the purpose of arresting attention and exciting thought at this very point. For until we see that religion and morality are at least possible *without* the Bible, we shall not make them what they ought to be *with* the Bible. By this I mean that there is something deeper in human life than either the Bible or the church, namely, the ethical and religious instinct, out of which both the Bible and the church have sprung, and which would still be one of the mightiest forces in the world even if there were no Bible and no church. The recognition of this fundamental fact is the very first condition of making a right use of the Bible, and of correcting the abuses to which we so often subject both it and those whom we teach from it.

Here, then, is the bedrock upon which we must stand: *Man is a moral and religious being by nature; in his own soul are spiritual impulses, promptings, intuitions, aspirations; and Bibles, churches, and teachers are merely helps, to wake him up, enlighten him, guide him, bless him.* This clear, simple, profound and vital truth is the one which, more than any other that I can state, needs due appreciation in the religious thinking of our time; and when duly appreciated, it will do more than any other to clarify religious dis-

cussion and instruction. It is the great central truth in all the new, valid thought of the present age.

Now consider the bearing of this fundamental principle upon the use of the Bible in the Sunday school.

1. At once we see that the most important object in the Sunday school is not the Bible, but the child. This little human being, with all his capacities and powers, this living creature made in the likeness of God, with unmeasured possibilities for good or evil, is here before us, the real center of all our interest; and what for? I answer: To be helped, especially in the direction of spiritual development; to be awakened, enlightened, strengthened, guided in the way of a true moral and religious life. The teacher is here beside this child, meeting him on the basis of interest and love, for the express purpose of trying to help him thus. Let the teacher never forget this fact, let the whole school remember it always—the central object of our concern is the living individual child.

2. Down deep in the heart of this child, hidden from the superficial gaze and but half recognized by the clearest insight, are native instincts, latent potentialities, vague, flitting feelings and longings, slowly forming into tendencies, expressing themselves in actions, and later developing habits and producing character. No man

knows all of the good or evil that may come out of that little child's heart; but we do know, at least we are absolutely to trust, that there is something divinely noble and beautiful there to which the wise and loving teacher may appeal. This is the most precious and sacred fact that claims our attention; it is prior to all Bibles, churches, and schools; and we must not fail to keep it distinctly in view in the presence of all our methods and mechanisms.

3. As already intimated, the teacher's main task is to do what he can, by wisdom and affection, to shape the unfolding of these inner spiritual tendencies of the child's nature; to awaken the divine voices in the chambers of his little soul; to strike the finer chords of his being, whose music is the sweetest and holiest that he may ever hear; to help him understand the sacred and august meaning of all his purest desires and convictions—in short, to bring him to moral and religious self-consciousness, so that he shall know himself as a spiritual being and be able at length to guide himself securely amid the temptations and duties of life. Such ought to be every teacher's intelligent aim, such his passionate desire, if he really seeks to help his pupils. Need I say that it is the most delicate and difficult, as it is the most blessed, service in all the world? Alas, that we blunder at it as we do!

4. In seeking to perform this vital service for

the child, the teacher and the school have two particular things to do, namely, to *nurture* the child and to *instruct* him. The two processes are closely related, but are not identical. True, there is a sense in which all instruction, if it be real, is nourishing; and yet it is not always or altogether so. Instruction consists mainly in imparting information; and information is not so much food as it is the raw material of food. At any rate I am sure there are ways of so presenting great, divine truths and ideals to the human soul as to nourish it in virtue, grace, and love, feeding it with what we justly call "the bread of life;" and there are other ways of so presenting them as merely to engage the contemplation of the mind and afford a correct intellectual view. I am equally sure that these two processes need to go together—the impartation of truth, and the inculcation of the spirit of truth; but I think that what young children chiefly need is nutriment rather than information. In other words, we should warm their little hearts with love, and nourish them in goodness, and strengthen them with high and righteous purposes before we try to give their minds a knowledge of many facts or a critical view of life's problems.

Now, if all this is plain, we are prepared to see why we should use the Bible in the Sunday school, why we must not use it too much, and how we may best use it.

1. Remembering that the nature and welfare of the child come first, and that the Sunday school exists for the purpose of ministering to his spiritual development, we are to use the Bible simply *as a help* to this end, and *because it is* a great, mighty, blessed help. It is such a help because it is so full of spiritual power; it throbs with the sense of righteousness, with faith in God, with the longing after a good life; and if we read it so as to drink in its spirit, or study it so as to appreciate its true teachings, we soon find that it powerfully quickens our native sense of right and wrong, vivifies our purest ideals of worthy living, makes us feel the presence of God in the affairs of this turbulent world, and shows us the pathway that leads the individual soul and the human race toward light and peace. No other literature was ever so rich and strong in these respects. To feed ourselves upon it, to instil its spirit into the hearts of our children, is to quicken and invigorate every noble impulse in us and them. To imbue our nation with its principles is to help our nation to be reverent, serious, honest, virtuous, fraternal, benevolent. It were almost impossible for any people or any person to drink long, deep draughts from this fountain without experiencing a life-giving influence of priceless value.

It is because the Bible has proved itself, through centuries of use, among all sorts and con-

ditions of men, in nearly every land on the face of the earth, to possess this power and to produce in some degree these effects, that we are warranted in continuing to employ it in our Sunday schools as our chief instrumentality for ministering to the moral and religious education of the young. Its solemn, impressive words make our liturgies and inspire our songs as no others are able to do; every mood of the soul, from penitence and grief to victory and joy, can express itself with wonderful felicity and variety in phrases or sentences culled from its pages; and the spell which its stately language and its exalted thoughts weave over our hearts brings us into communion with divine things, hallowed and beautiful, such as we scarcely ever realize in any other way—such as only Nature can afford us when we are in our finest, most receptive, most responsive attitude. Indeed, without the Bible to prompt our worship and guide our meditation, it is altogether likely that we should not see one-half of the spiritual meaning which we now read in the great Book of Nature. The Bible helps us to interpret Nature divinely, as it likewise helps us to interpret life and our own souls and the universe divinely. For all these reasons, and the many that go with them, we use the Bible in the Sunday school, and feel that nothing else can take its place. And yet it is only a help, a tool, in the hands of living men and women to minister to the spiritual development of the young.

2. But we must not use the Bible too exclusively. It is entirely possible, even easy, to do so. Remembering that the Bible is not the source of the ethical and religious impulses of the human soul, but merely an instrumentality for their reinforcement, we must always pay chief attention to this living word of God that is written and engraven, not on tables of stone, not on rolls of parchment, not on printed pages, but "in fleshly tables of the heart"—the freshest and most potent of all divine influences for every spiritual child of the Eternal Father. It is here, if anywhere, that God and man must meet—in the inner sanctuary, the true "holy of holies," of each human life; it is here that each of us must learn somehow to feel, recognize, and understand God; it is here, in these deepest and most august experiences, that "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God." If we allow the Bible or any other external agency to come too abruptly or too frequently into this private sanctuary, we put something between ourselves and our Father which may possibly hinder rather than help our communion; and if we thrust the Bible or any other agency thus between the little child and the great God, we may prevent the very thing we want mainly to secure—the child's reverent hearing and glad recognition of the living voice of its heavenly Father. Here is our perplexing paradox: No Bible, no church,

no minister must be permitted to stand between the human soul and God to *separate* the two; and yet all Bibles, all churches, all ministers must be welcomed to stand between them *to bring them together.*

Again, if we use the Bible too exclusively, we shall almost inevitably convey the impression that the Bible and religion are identical, that we are necessarily studying and teaching religion when we are studying and teaching the Bible; whereas such is not the case. The Bible is an historical product of the religious spirit; as such it is of measureless worth, because bearing so clear and copious a witness to God's dealings with a certain race, or with certain races, and likewise with many individuals, in the remote past; but it is not itself religion, and we must guard against the notion that God confined his dealings and his disclosures to the Israelites of two and three thousand years ago; also we must guard against the notion that whatever belonged to the Israelites—their land, which they took by violence from the Canaanites, their battles and intrigues, their crude and erroneous conceptions of the universe—must necessarily have been religious and acceptable in the sight of God. What we really want to make sure of is that we and our children shall see that, as God dealt with the Israelitish people in the olden time, and made known to them somewhat of his truth and will, so does he deal with all

peoples today, and unfold his great, holy purposes for their guidance and blessing. To this end we need constantly to translate history into experience, to interpret history in the light of experience, to read the story of God's ways in the past in the light of his ways with us here and now. Surely, if we thus learn to find God in the life of the present, for ourselves individually, for our own country, and for the whole modern world, we shall not fail to trace his handiwork among the nations of antiquity, even more widely than Israel ever dreamed.

3. From these reflections it becomes apparent that we shall best use the Bible in the Sunday school by using it discriminatingly, selectively, yet comprehensively, and above all vitally.

a) We must *discriminate* between true and false, good and bad, high and low in its contents; for they are not uniform and equal. For instance, take the conduct of Jacob in defrauding his brother Esau by deceiving their aged father Isaac at the instigation of their mother Rebekah: if there is any reason for presenting this story at all to young children, and if it is to be studied by older pupils, the whole case should be brought squarely to the bar of their intelligence and conscience for just judgment; and even very young children may be enabled to see and feel that the conduct of Jacob and Rebekah was grossly reprehensible. No hesitation should be indulged in

pronouncing this verdict, when fairly and sincerely reached, because forsooth Jacob became the servant of Jehovah for great ends; he did not become such a servant *because* of this deception, but rather *in spite* of it; and the religiously valuable truth may be impressed, that God often uses imperfect and very faulty men to work out his vast purposes, but their faults and sins are nevertheless to be condemned and do really hinder the divine plans.

Similar distinctions, intellectual or moral, will occur frequently in the Bible narratives: for example, in the story of Rahab, the harlot, when she hid the spies and lied about it; in the accounts of the ruthless slaughter of people and animals by Joshua's conquering armies; in the tale of David's wicked act of procuring Uriah's death; and—not to mention many others—in the New Testament record of Peter's base denial of the Master. All these, just because they involve such distinctions, which appeal to the sense of right and justice in the human soul, are most instructive instances of conduct; but to fail to bring them out, to fail to evoke the honest judgment of the young regarding them, is to make well-nigh a total failure in their use as material for moral and religious education. Even as children must be taught to discriminate and judge justly in regard to the words and deeds of living men and women in the world around them today, so must

they be helped to do with respect to the characters that come before them in the Bible. Nothing is more important than to acquire the habit of sincerely trying thus to judge justly about people and questions in everyday life; and the study of the Bible, if pursued in this way, may be made to contribute effectually and abundantly to such a discipline. But the neglect of this principle of discrimination, leading to a blurring of distinctions in the Scriptures, and to a consequent blunting of the finest sensibilities of the soul, may render the study of the Bible harmful rather than helpful. Therefore teacher and pupil alike should, so far as possible, heed the significant question once asked by the great Teacher of whom we all are glad to learn: "Why *even of yourselves* judge ye not what is right?" [2]

b) The Bible should be used *selectively*. Not all of it is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for discipline which is in righteousness." [3] Certainly many portions of it are unsuitable for the instruction of young children, and others are questionable even for boys and girls under twenty years of age. Not only the genealogical lists and the ceremonial laws found in the Old Testament; but also the stories of sexual sins, of barbaric cruelties, of murder, of merciless bloodshed in war, are unfit for the spir-

[2] Luke xii. 57.

[3] II Tim. iii. 16.

itual culture of the young. For this and other reasons, an expurgated Bible is needed—such an edition, for example, as *The Bible for Children*.[4] Of course in the Sunday school only small sections of the Scriptures can be studied anyhow, for want of time; but the point here made is that, on grounds of fitness or merit, there must be a careful selection of passages.

In making such a selection the guiding principle should be to try to meet the real needs of the pupils, which will be different at different stages of their development. For the youngest children —such as are usually included in the primary grades—it is best to use only a few biblical materials, consisting mainly of those choice stories or sentences which help to give them the great and beautiful thought of God's loving care for the world of nature and human kind, and which tell them a little about the childhood of Jesus and about his noble character as a great and good Teacher. Other materials—especially pictures, and lessons from Nature, and the Christian holidays, and the life of the family—can be used to excellent advantage; and above all the intelligent, reverent, and loving attitude and influence of the teacher, with songs, prayers, and other exercises, will make the work of this department happy and sweet. Older children—from nine to fourteen years—will be interested and helped by

[4] Century Company.

the Old Testament stories, and by the New Testament narratives of Christ's life and Paul's work; and also by the parables and teachings of Christ, if wisely and vitally handled by the teacher. Still later, the young people can be led to see and feel the essential nobleness of Jesus' character, and the loftiness and soundness of his ethical and religious teachings; and, with him as a center or standard, they can trace the moral development of the Israelitish people through their long, hard history. At every point the ruling aim should be to adapt the Bible to the actual needs of the pupils, and to employ such portions of it at different stages as may be best calculated to appeal vitally to their growing spiritual consciousness.

c) At the same time, the Bible should be studied somewhat *comprehensively*. By this I mean that there should be some evident totality, wholeness, completeness in the passages chosen. Especially should this principle hold in the older classes, with pupils sixteen years of age and over. Separate books of the Bible should be taken up as wholes. Students who, in the public schools of even the grammar grade, spend a few weeks in reading "The Merchant of Venice," until they know it almost by heart and very thoroughly appreciate it, can surely be taught to read and comprehend the Gospel according to Luke, if a reasonable length of time is taken and if the

teacher is competent. The same may be said respecting nearly every other book in the Bible; and it is vastly better to study each book separately, as a whole, and somewhat thoroughly, seeking to understand the point of view, style, and leading ideas of its author, than to "run, hop, skip, and jump" from book to book and passage to passage, until nothing but fragmentary, hazy, and bewildering notions of the Bible can remain in the pupils' minds. A certain class of boys, seven in number and from sixteen to twenty years of age, has recently spent about four months—that is, about twenty-five minutes each Sunday for four months—in reading the book of Job, with only a little comment, and with no preaching or moralizing on the part of the teacher; and it is perfectly plain that they have been much more interested and have derived greater profit than could have been the case in any desultory study of a half-dozen different books in the same period. The class had previously read, in a similar way, the bulk of Genesis, Exodus, parts of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, a portion of Judges, the whole of Ruth; and will go on to read perhaps Isaiah and Jeremiah, and several of the New Testament books. All lesson papers and "helps" are discarded; the Bible is given a chance to speak for itself; and each particular book studied is treated as an entity, until its individuality is somewhat clearly understood. This is what

is meant by the principle of comprehensiveness in the use of the Bible in the Sunday school. Much more might be said concerning other aspects and applications of the principle, but limits of space forbid.

d) Finally, and chiefly, the Bible should be used *vitally*. Perhaps the worst evil in Sunday-school work—possibly in all other kinds of religious work—is a lack of vitality, reality, sincerity. Songs are sung, Scriptures are read, prayers are said that are not half meant; these exercises become lifeless formalities; they do not come from the souls of the leaders, and do not "reach" the souls of the followers. What wonder that, in such an atmosphere, the study of the Bible is a meaningless procedure, and that the Sunday school loses its grip upon the young people? Nothing will hold them long or do them any good except *reality*—a vital and sincere spirit in the hearts of officers and teachers. Given this, there will be earnest work; a note of genuineness will be felt in all the services; and the lessons from the Bible will be approached in reverence and with positive interest. It is pitiful, it is almost sacreligious, to take the great utterances of Scripture, full of exalted and holy meanings, and bandy them about. or repeat them flippantly; and likewise to sing carelessly the loftiest and sweetest hymns, that have been born of anguish or transcendent joy, when human souls have been

transfigured in the light of God's presence. Is there anything that can work a more serious injury to the finest sensibilities of the spirits of children and youth, in the name of religion, than mockery like this?

Plainly, then, it is imperative that the principal condition of effective spiritual work in the Sunday school should be recognized as that of spiritual *vitality* on the part of pastor, officers, and teachers. The great, strong, holy spirit of the Bible must first penetrate *their* hearts; then it will be surely felt, to some extent, throughout the school. The noble teachings of the Bible must have some real power and find some real exemplification in the lives and characters of those in the church who are set to lead and teach the young, or this very best Book in all the world will fail to accomplish its blessed mission in behalf of souls naturally susceptible to its beautiful influence. In other words, the Bible must be translated into life, into experience, by the teacher, and must thus reach the pupil *through* the personality of the teacher, in order to do its inestimable work in the moral and religious education of children and youth. The teacher is to be the living connecting link between the Bible and the child.

Because the spiritual cultivation of the young is the most delicate and sacred task committed to the Sunday school, or indeed to any other agency,

and because the Bible is the greatest and best of tools for this purpose, it becomes supremely important that the utmost pains should be taken to enable the teachers to understand the Bible, to understand childhood, and to know how best to try to give the former to the latter. All this implies intelligent preparation, knowledge, skill, loving interest and devotion, and a living apprehension and appreciation of spiritual truth as related to an unfolding human life. It implies also the subordination of the Bible to the teacher and the child, rather than the subordination of the teacher and the child to the Bible. The Bible is merely an instrument, a vehicle, a means to an end; the teacher is a superior agency to reach the same end; and that end is the spiritual awakening, enlightenment, refinement, invigoration, and sanctification of a growing child of God. The child is the center of interest; and both teacher and Bible are to work together, the one as master and the other as implement, to fashion in immortal beauty the slowly developing character of a being made "but little lower than the angels."

It will be a happy day for the Sunday school, and a blessed augury for the vital advance of the kingdom of heaven, when the new appreciation of the Bible and the new appreciation of childhood are duly supplemented by a new appreciation of the joyous privilege and the high responsibility of the religious teacher, who shall know

how to use and not abuse the Bible, how to help and not hurt the child; and who shall be adequately supported by a church that knows how to honor and compensate such a holy service. The dawn of that golden day is already at hand.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BIBLE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL

Has the Bible a legitimate place in the public school? This question, with its implications, is receiving increasing attention in our country at present. The issues raised by it have been much debated in recent years by able partisans, and judicial students have been seeking some ample common ground on which conflicting claims might be justly and wisely reconciled. It cannot be said that a large measure of success has attended these efforts, and yet they have not been without some valuable results; at least they have made it clear that vital interests are involved in the discussion, to which thoughtful people cannot afford to be indifferent.

Of course the problem as it now confronts us has a history; it strikes its roots into the soil of the past, and we must glance at the developments which lie behind us, in order to comprehend the existing situation today.

Not many centuries ago—four or five—religion was the dominant interest in the western world; and the Church, which was the chief religious institution, exercised a controlling influence over theology, education, charity, and many civil and political affairs: indeed, it had long been the aim of the Church to be absolute

mistress in both the spiritual and the secular realms; and the great conflict of the later Middle Age arose largely from the struggle of the State to free itself from the tyranny of the Church. This conflict, protracted and titanic, enters, in one form or another, into all our modern history, making and explaining England and America as far as any other factor that has contributed to the production of their peculiar institutions. At length the State was completely successful as against the Church, especially here in this new country. Accordingly the one striking feature of our civil and ecclesiastical situation is a reversal of the mediæval arrangement, making the State not only independent but supreme, so that the Church really derives her legal existence from the State, just as any other chartered body does; although the Church is left free within her own distinctive sphere. Thus we have a free Church within a free State, and the individual citizen is more free in both than anywhere else in the world.

As a part or concomitant of this very significant historic development, the State has gradually taken over the control of a number of important interests which were formerly within the jurisdiction of the Church, wholly or mainly—for example, the regulation of marriage and divorce; the administration of charity, or the care of the dependent, defective, and delinquent

classes; and the conduct of education. The Church still has her share in the promotion of human welfare by and through these vital concerns; but the State's share has steadily increased, until now it is paramount, and without its great work in these respects we can hardly see how our social fabric could be maintained, and certainly life would be vastly poorer for us all.

Is it a misfortune that the State has thus become the principal agency for the management of these great interests? It is certainly so regarded, particularly in the matter of education, by a large and respectable class of people among us, notably our Roman Catholic brethren. On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of our citizens consider the development an immense blessing; and I, for one, am deeply convinced that the right lies with the majority in this case. For think what has really occurred. The principles and spirit of the Christian religion, inculcating and reinforcing all pure social sympathy and solicitude, and prompting to every noble sort of helpful service, have overflowed the confines of the Church and are spreading far and wide through society at large; and society at large, responding to this diffused and holy influence, is engaging, with the revenues and machinery at its command, in gigantic enterprises of human betterment for all classes and individuals. Is this

to be regretted? Do we want the sunshine of Christianity bottled up in the Church? Are we not glad to see it radiating in all directions, and brightening every place where men live? Indeed, is not this precisely the grand object of Christianity—the effective diffusion of the Christ-like spirit everywhere? Henry Drummond was right when he said:

> People do not dispute that religion is in the Church. What is now wanted is to let them see it in the City. One Christian City, one City in any part of the earth, whose citizens from the greatest to the humblest lived in the spirit of Christ, where religion had overflowed the Churches and passed into the streets, inundating every house and workshop, and permeating the whole social and commercial life—one such Christian City would seal the redemption of the world.[1]

Now I hold that our entire modern democratic movement, in spite of all its faults, means exactly this—the overflowing of Christianity from the Church into the City and the State, so that these great organizations, representing all the people, are undertaking to work for the welfare of all the people in certain large and vital things—sanitation, charity, education, art, and even amusement. I call this process, for want of a better word to describe it, a vast consecration of society; and cannot but rejoice that it is taking place.[2]

[1] *The City Without a Church*, p. 16.

[2] A few sentences from Professor Henry S. Nash's excellent book, *Genesis of the Social Conscience*, may show more fully what is here implied: "The soul has entered the State. The State has

Now in the light of this brief historical review we see how and why education has come to be so largely an affair of the State, particularly in our own country; and it is easy to understand why formal religious instruction has had no place in our public-school system. The divorce between Church and State, which is here an accomplished fact, is the result of a long and bitter controversy, which was inevitable, and the issue of which marked a great advance in the progress of our western civilization. But because people in our part of the world are very sharply divided along lines of religious belief and practice, while a few even are hostile to any and every form of religion, it has seemed necessary for the State, representing and serving the whole population, to relegate religious teaching to the Church, leaving it out of the public schools altogether, in order to deal consistently and justly with all classes and individuals.

On this account our public schools have been called "godless" by unfriendly critics, and have

acquired some of the prerogatives of the Church, and is likely to acquire more; for the career of the free State has barely begun. The creation of a united Germany, the birth of Italian unity, the rise of Japan, the vast expansion of lay education through the public school and the university, and many another feature of contemporary life, tell us with unmistakable emphasis that for an indefinite stretch of centuries in the future the conception of the State is bound to gain steadily in spiritual significance, and in the power to command the spirit and imagination of our picked men and women. . . . The Church therefore is facing a new fact which has a central position in the spiritual order of things." (Pp. 302, 303.)

been charged even with being nurseries of a kind of infidelity and immorality which will soon or late bring our nation to grief. I think there is a degree of truth in this criticism, and shall try to estimate it later on; at least I suppose the majority of the staunch supporters of the public-school system would acknowledge that the omission of all religious instruction entails some incidental losses to our civilization and to the cultivation of the race that are of a serious character. But neither critic nor friend has yet shown us a more excellent way for a strictly public-school system in a thoroughly democratic country. Meanwhile, those who are most dissatisfied are establishing parochial schools; and of course there are many private schools, with or without the prominent incorporation of the religious element. Nevertheless, the public-school system goes on working and growing, and is the great educational agency for our nation as a whole.

Now the reason why the Bible has been denied a place in the public schools altogether, or has been restricted in its use to the mere reading, without comment, of brief passages, lies in the fact that the Bible is so closely associated in the popular mind with religion as to appear to be a very definite *religious* instrumentality. It has been supposed that the Bible could not be studied or extensively read without the inculcation of theological conceptions and doctrines which

might be offensive to someone, and so the rule of impartial justice should be broken. As indicating this prevalent attitude in our country, the following exhibit of custom and law is given by Dr. Charles H. Thurber, of Boston, in his address before the first Convention of the Religious Education Association, at Chicago, February, 1903:

In New York State, the Bible may be read, if no one objects, but must not be read if anyone objects. Massachusetts requires some portion of the Bible to be read daily in the public schools. In Missouri the trustees may compel Bible reading. In Illinois a student may be expelled for studying during the reading of the Bible. In Georgia the Bible must be used in the school. Iowa leaves the matter entirely to the judgment of the teacher and permits no dictation by either parents or trustees. In Arkansas the trustees settle the question. In North and South Dakota the Bible may not be excluded from any public school, and may be read daily for not to exceed ten minutes, at the option of the teacher. In most states that permit Bible reading no pupil can be compelled against his parents' wishes to take part in the reading or to be present during the reading. But in Maine a child expelled for refusing to read the Bible cannot recover damages. Arkansas forbids the granting of a certificate to a teacher who does not believe in a Supreme Being, and Rhode Island recommends the rejection of any teacher who is in the habit of ridiculing or scoffing at religion. Washington prohibits the reading of the Bible in the schools; Arizona revokes the certificate of any teacher who conducts religious exercises in school; and in 1890 the supreme court of Wisconsin decided that the reading of the Bible in the public schools is unconstitutional. In 1861 the Cincinnati school board was upheld in forbidding the reading of the Bible. The same action was taken in Chicago in 1875, and in New Haven in 1878.

New Hampshire requires that "the morning exercises of all the schools shall commence with the reading of the Scriptures, followed by the Lord's Prayer." Pennsylvania says: "The Scriptures come under the head of textbooks, and they should not be omitted from the list;" in 1895 the Bible was read in 87½ per cent. of the schools of the state. Virginia seems to have no law on the subject, but the Bible is generally read. South Carolina has no law on the subject. The Bible is not read in any of the schools of Utah.

Continues Dr. Thurber:

In 1896, reports on this subject were gathered from 946 superintendents, representing all parts of the country. Of this number 454 reported the Bible as read in all their schools, 295 reported it as read in part of their schools, and 197 reported it as read in none of their schools. The law ranges, as you have observed, between absolute prohibition of Bible reading; permitting it when no one objects, but not otherwise; leaving it to the option of the local authorities, either trustees or teacher; and requiring it, either leaving the amount and method to the option of the teacher or prescribing a very limited amount of reading daily.

Dr. Thurber properly remarks:

At best this is not much, not much of the Bible, and almost nothing in the way of effective teaching. But it is well to understand that there are laws governing this matter, and that we are not dealing with a question that can be settled offhand in a religious gathering or a teachers' convention. If there is not more direct religious teaching in our schools, at least it is not the fault of the teachers. Nor can there be more than there is now, unless the laws are changed. Referring to the reasons I have suggested for the enactment of these laws, and with a knowledge of the lurking danger of sectarian strife, we cannot escape the conviction that we have here a most difficult and delicate problem.[3]

[3] *Proceedings* of the Convention, pp. 131-133.

Having thus got the situation fairly before us, by a glance at its history and by a statement of its present aspects, we are ready to ask what can be done to improve it.

Evidently no radical departure from existing usage can be hastily made; any change that may be brought about must come gradually and without force; strife or bigotry, on either side, will do more harm than good. At the same time, it is quite apparent that certain modifications of current thought are silently growing which are tending to alter the judgment heretofore prevailing, and which are possibly preparing the way for a wiser, more generous public policy.

1. There is a growing appreciation of the Bible as a noble literature. It is almost universally conceded that the Scriptures comprise some of the very finest and grandest writings ever produced; and it is increasingly recognized by intelligent people as a misfortune and an injustice to deprive the youth of our land of an acquaintance with this ancient, incomparable literature. Not only ought Christian children to know about it, but all who love culture or for whom culture should be an end in education are entitled to understand the large place which the Bible has occupied in history, and to appreciate the great ideas and the exalted spirit that make the Bible unique. As the literary excellences of the Bible become more familiar, and as the study of litera-

ture in general increases, disclosing countless allusions to biblical passages, the demand for some knowledge of the Bible purely as literature is likely to grow. It is growing at present, and I am confident that it will continue to do so.

2. There is likewise an increasing appreciation of the Bible as a means of moral culture. It is the most intensely moral literature in the world. It throbs with moral earnestness, it pleads for righteousness with passionate ardor, and its teaching about duty is clear, positive, comprehensive, and applies with equal effectiveness to the individual and to society as a whole. Because of this remarkable quality possessed by the Bible, ethical teachers like Dr. Felix Adler and Mr. Walter L. Sheldon turn to the stories, prophecies, psalms, and parables of the Scriptures as the very best writings for awakening moral sentiments in the young, or for strengthening moral conviction and purpose, or for affording moral guidance in practical conduct.[4] The simple fact is that no literature surpasses, no extensive literature equals, the Bible in this respect. Therefore it is too important a means of ethical culture to be ignored. Thoughtful people are more and more taking this view.

3. There is a growing recognition of the inadequacy of a merely intellectual education, or

[4] See Dr. Adler's *Moral Education;* also Mr. Sheldon's *An Ethical Sunday School.*

even an intellectual and an æsthetic education. Everywhere, in recent years, educators have been calling loudly for *character* as the essential product which our schools, especially our public schools, should turn out. The acquisition of information or the sharpening of wits may be but an equipment for shrewder crime, unless countervailed by moral invigoration and discipline. The chief stress of modern life is a moral stress, the chief danger that threatens the modern State is moral danger, and the chief need in safeguarding and perpetuating our precious heritage of free institutions is *character,* formed upon firm principle, and imbued with the spirit and power of righteousness. Otherwise we shall make shipwreck of our American experiment, while wrecking the lives of countless thousands of our individual men and women. This, too, is a deepening conviction among enlightened people.

4. Once more, there is a growing recognition of the great advantage and the serious responsibility of the public school for effecting the moral education of the young. It reaches directly and commandingly the vast majority of the children of our country; it has them in charge from three to five hours a day, and five days a week, for from thirty to forty weeks a year, for eight or ten years. Thus its opportunity is the largest and best that is possessed by any organized institution among us. Not even the Church can do

so much with and for the children, because of its want of time. The schools have the time, the children, the material equipment, the support and compulsion of law, the deep interest of the people in general, and the service of trained men and women as teachers. Surely their opportunity is large, and their responsibility for results must be held to be correspondingly large. If, to no slight extent, these results may be rightly expected to be moral, the schools must certainly fulfil somehow an exceedingly important moral function.

Here, then, are certain elements of possibly a new judgment respecting the question before us: on the one hand, we have a growing appreciation of the Bible as a noble literature, and also as a means of moral culture; and, on the other hand, we have an increasing demand for moral results in education, along with an increasing recognition of the opportunity and responsibility of the public school for furnishing it.

If, now, we could take two or three additional steps, we might perhaps reach a satisfactory solution of our problem.

a) If we could discard the dogmatic use of the Bible, and treat it simply as a great literature imbued with the spirit of morality and religion, and could be content to read it *as* literature, with a view merely to letting this strong, characteristic quality make its own natural im-

pression upon the mind and heart, we might quicken the moral and religious *spirit* in the souls of the young without attempting to impart, much less impose, any definite theological or ecclesiastical notions.

b) If, moreover, we could find and employ special teachers to go into the public schools to teach the Bible in this way, as we now employ special instructors in music and drawing—teachers abundantly qualified for a delicate and difficult task—we should approach still nearer the goal so earnestly desired by many good people.

c) If, once more, we could simplify or lighten the present overloaded school curriculum, giving the pupils a little more time to feel, to absorb, and to think, we should discover that the Bible, when used as has been just now proposed, would, like a noble production in poetry, painting, sculpture, or music, convey its own sublime message into many a young mind and heart; whereas, *without time to feel*—that is, without opportunity to ponder and wonder and respond—even the reading of the Bible would be a superficial and worthless exercise.

Theoretically all this would seem feasible enough, and justifiable. No thoughtful person will dispute the claim that the Bible is a great literature, or that its ideas and ideals, its historic associations and its potent spirit have had a substantial influence in the development of our mod-

ern civilization. Surely, then, it were illogical to refuse a recognition of the Bible *as* such a literature and such a powerful factor, and unjust to the young to withhold from them a knowledge of these things. The history of Israel is as deserving of study as the history of Persia or that of Italy; and there ought not to be any more difficulty in reading the writings of Isaiah or Jeremiah, for example, in connection with Israel's history than in reading the sermons of Savonarola, or interpreting the art of Michael Angelo, in connection with Italian history. Indeed, if we may properly decorate our public schoolrooms with distinctively Christian pictures, why exclude all knowledge of the Christian Scriptures which helped to produce such pictures and can alone explain them? If we relate the story of the Pilgrims, in teaching the history of the United States, how can we fail to imply and convey some conception of the place and influence of the Bible in the lives of those universally honored pioneers? Or if we describe the Spanish explorations and settlements in the New World, why ignore or minimize the religious considerations which often had a large place in their plans? The fact is, we cannot dodge the subject of religion, if we try, in the study of history, literature, art, music, or any other important phase of modern civilization; and we ought not to try. But it is possible to treat religion in a large, fair,

sympathetic way; to distinguish between the religious instinct or sentiment or spirit, on the one hand, and its expressions in worship, theology and ecclesiasticism, on the other hand; and to seek to quicken and strengthen this religious *spirit,* which underlies all forms of worship, all creeds, and all churches, without indulging any prejudices or preferences respecting dogmatic and sectarian interests.

If we can bring ourselves into this generous and reverent attitude, learning to have more regard for the soul of religion than for its body, we shall soon raise up, in our churches, normal schools, and universities, a supply of enlightened, magnanimous teachers who shall be competent to deal with the vital interests of moral and religious education as wisely, delicately, and justly as others now deal with history, literature, music, and art; and we shall find that there is ample room in the public school for such teachers, loving the spiritual aspects of civilization and sympathizing with all the noble aspirations of the race, to make a vital, inspiring, and delightful use of the Bible *purely as a great spiritual literature inculcating the spirit of morality and religion,* without aiming to impart a bit of theological bias or any taint of sectarianism. Then we shall discover that the influence of the Bible will be to set *righteousness* into the midst of life's great interests, and to buttress it by *reverence* on the one

side and by *brotherly love* on the other side. Thus we shall acquaint the young with what is most essential in this precious literature, and shall powerfully reinforce the central principle of all good conduct, *righteousness,* to which every conscience testifies, by the hallowing spirit of reverence and by the unselfish spirit of brotherly love.

The obstacles to the course here suggested are mainly inherent in the fact that the people generally are not yet ready to regard and treat the Bible in the large and free way just indicated; nor are they prepared to be content to put the emphasis upon the *soul* of religion, and to consider its manifold bodily forms as of secondary importance. But they are progressing rapidly toward this more liberal and more spiritual position. With the advances made during the last generation in biblical knowledge and in educational theory, we may reasonably expect another generation to bring us to the desired goal—to the point where we may appropriate the essential and potent *spirit* of the Bible to the paramount ends of true culture and of ethical-religious impression, without injustice to any individual or class.

The process, however, will be necessarily gradual and prolonged. We must all be patient, magnanimous, and kind while it is going on. We cannot force results or methods. We must give every interest a fair hearing; and we must wait. The public mind will have to "catch up" with

the advanced positions of biblical scholars and educational leaders ere the literary, historical, and spiritual values of the Bible can be handled in the public schools with due discrimination and appreciation to render the work acceptable to the people at large or highly profitable to the pupils. We must remember that the existing situation, involving the divorce between Church and State, along with the entire exclusion of religious instruction and the partial exclusion of even the reading of the Bible from the public schools, resulted from certain powerful ideas and influences long operative in the past which we have not yet wholly outgrown; and we are now in the midst of the process of transforming some of these, and must patiently await the great improvement which the change will ultimately yield.

A right ideal of the place of Scripture in the public school consistently followed might have prevented a woeful setback to real enlightenment on subjects pertaining to morality and religion. But we had first to learn what this ideal is, and how biblical science should be taught. Perhaps the reaction may come when the notion of the Bible as a compendium of standard religious doctrines, a textbook of theology, has yielded to a more reasonable faith. Perhaps the beginning may be when the public sees the right ideal maintained, and the right system of biblical science pursued, in our Christian colleges and universities.[5]

The foregoing examination of the question brings us back to the present status of affairs.

[5] Professor B. W. Bacon, in *Proceedings of the Religious Education Association*, 1904, p. 131.

We see that this cannot be suddenly or extensively altered. Discussion and tentative experiments may bring some modifications of thought and policy, but no radical or sweeping changes can be expected; neither would they be desirable. Meanwhile, however, we may well take to heart two or three considerations.

1. It is cause for gratification that so much is being done in our colleges and universities along the very lines just indicated in Professor Bacon's words. Within the last two decades many of these institutions have established professorships and courses in biblical literature and history, which have become quite as popular as others. The fruits of this fundamental work are already accruing in two ways: sending out numbers of soundly educated young men and women in matters pertaining to a correct general conception of the Bible; and also spreading through many communities a new and more enlightened interest in the proper study of the Scriptures. Churches are benefiting by all this; and gradually a generation will grow up that will easily and fully share the new appreciation of the Bible, whence we may look for a wider and more vital use, as well as a more keen enjoyment, of the manifold riches of this ancient, age-lasting literature. Here, again, the institutions of the higher education are proving themselves the worthy guides and sure redeemers of society.

The nature and grounds of such educational work are admirably stated by Professor Henry T. Fowler, as follows:

> This movement is actuated, it would seem, by the same motives that support the study of other literatures and histories, namely, an appreciation of intellectual, aesthetic, and practical value. Only thus can the results of the present development become widespread and permanent. At best, the rapidity of the spread must be limited by the whole force of educational tendency and tradition that has emphasized other literatures rather than this one. It must be limited, too, by present popular feeling as to the true function of the Bible, by present interest of students in the modern rather than the ancient, by present lack of suitable teachers and endowments. A growing recognition, however, on the part of educators of the true claims of the Bible as a part of a liberal education will steadily overcome these difficulties.[6]

2. While awaiting the enrichment of the popular mind, thus to be ultimately derived from the work of the colleges and universities, we must remember that we have other agencies than the public schools for educating the young in morality and religion. Education is, indeed, "a unitary process," as President Nicholas Murray Butler has said; but it does not therefore follow that all phases of education must be furnished in one place or under one system. As a matter of fact, it is not so, and it cannot be so. Everything educates, or miseducates—the home, the school, the church, the street, the newspaper, life, Nature. We do not expect the public school to instruct our

[6] Address, Religious Education Association, 1904; see *Proceedings*, p. 136.

children in dancing, in instrumental music, in etiquette, in painting and sculpture, although all these are regarded as essential by thousands of people. No more should we require the distinctively ethical and religious aspects of education to be supplied by the public schools, much beyond the rudimentary ideas, principles and habits necessary to all proper conduct, which are incidentally yet inevitably inculcated through the ordinary relationships of teachers and pupils. We send our children to the dancing master for one kind of education, to the music teacher for another kind, and to the art school for still another.

This brings us plainly to see that we are to look chiefly to the home and the church for the education of the young in morality and religion. And precisely here lies one of the points most needing to be strengthened in the life of today. The due co-operation of the home and the church with the school is an imperative requirement, but it is far from being adequately met. The home has been somewhat weakened, in many instances, by the increasing influence of wealth, the growth of the boarding-house habit, and, alas! the too facile disruption of the marriage bond; and it is to be feared that it has been further weakened, all unwittingly, by being relieved of the sense of parental responsibility for the education of the children through the taking-over of this task by the public school and the Sunday

school. The time has come when we need to understand as thoroughly as possible that the school and the church cannot fulfil the function of the home, but can merely supplement it; and when we must do everything in our power to create and maintain a living sympathy, an earnest and intelligent co-operation, between the home and the school, between the home and the church. And it must be said that the church is not at present rising to its opportunity in this respect. By inviting the family to send its children to the Sunday school for education in morals and religion, it has done much, albeit with the best of intentions, to break down the sense of parental responsibility for such eduation; but it has not done enough to counteract this evil and to secure a greater good by throwing back *upon* the home a spiritual interpretation of such responsibility, and by throwing back *into* the home sufficient helpful influences to enable the parents to do their duty. A reform or improvement in the church's ministration in this particular is urgently called for; it cannot commence too soon; and when started, the church will find a new and most fertile field for the abundant production of the fruits of the spirit. If the home and the church can be brought into vital connection and adequate co-operation, as would appear to be one of the most natural openings or relationships for the ministry of Christian education, there will be

little cause for complaint on account of the neglect of moral and religious interests in the work of the public schools. Let the responsibility rest where it really belongs.

3. Finally, we must not fail to appreciate the spiritual influence of the public schools under existing conditions. They are *not* "godless," nor are they immoral, either in the positive sense of breeding bad morals or in the negative sense of failing to inculcate good morals. To allege that they are so, implying that such is generally the case, is a gross and malignant slander; and when one sees this charge made most frequently in precisely those quarters where the effort is most sedulous to get sectarian parochial schools accepted as an equivalent substitute for the public schools, so that they may receive a portion of the public funds, or so that their supporters may not be taxed for the maintenance of the public-school system, one cannot feel that the allegation proceeds from entirely disingenuous motives.

Wholesale judgments are always liable to contain a considerable element of error; but scarcely any general judgment is safer than that the public schools of America, as a rule and on the whole, tend very strongly to produce a noble type of life and character. Their teachers, as a class, are high-grade men and women, whose personal influence is refining and elevating; they are usually earnest, honest, unselfish, public-spirited,

and they diligently seek to present true ideals to their pupils, and to incite them to worthy endeavor. If the schools do not directly and purposely inculcate reverence in the religious sense, they do at least, by their ordinary and necessary work, instil *reverence for excellence;* and this lies at the foundation of all true reverence for things divine and eternal. More than a foundation for the building of a good character, more than the humble beginning of a preparation for life-long growth in knowledge, usefulness, and happiness, the public schools cannot be reasonably required to furnish. By furnishing this, even to a moderate extent, in the enlightenment and training they afford, in the refining and elevating influence they exert, and in the noble ideals they present, they are fitting the children to enter upon the larger life which opens continuously before them—the reading of good books, including the Bible; the study of history, comprising its moral and religious phases as well as its economic, social, and political; the appreciation of art; the pursuit of scientific knowledge; and the cultivation of the virtues and graces of Christian manhood and womanhood. Rendering this fundamental service, their work is of priceless worth. If thereupon the Bible and all the great spiritual interests which it represents do not make, through other avenues, an effective appeal to the minds and hearts of our American youth, the

fault cannot be justly laid at the door of the public school.[7]

[7] Two or three references may be given for recent and valuable discussion of the interests of moral and religious education. (1) *Education in Religion and Morals*, by Professor George A. Coe (Revell, publisher). (2) *Moral Education*, by Edward Howard Griggs (N. Y.: B. W. Huebsch, 1904), contains extensive bibliography. (3) Vol. III of the *Proceedings of the Religious Education Association* (1905), especially pp. 219-71 relating to the public schools.

CHAPTER XV

THE BIBLE IN THE HOME

In treating of the Bible in the home we are dealing with another phase of the great problem of moral and religious education. We have seen that, on account of its surpassing spiritual merits, the Bible is to be used in the Sunday school as the chief instrument of spiritual culture, especially when wielded by teachers who have been deeply quickened by its influence and have thoroughly learned some of its holy lessons. We have seen likewise that, on account of its literary excellence, and its historic interest, as well as its lofty spiritual character, it is entitled to a place in the public school, side by side with the literature, history, and art of Greece and Rome; although this kind of study should be sharply distinguished from its employment for purposes of dogmatic instruction, which is not compatible with the genius of our American public-school system. And now in seeking to determine why and how the Bible should be used in the home, we are touching upon the educational function of the third of these principal formative institutions in our modern civilization.

When we consider the home intelligently we quickly discover that it is of fundamental importance. The family is the primary social in-

stitution. It is based upon natural instincts of the deepest and strongest character, whose roots are in the body, but whose flowers and fruits are in the soul. Marriage and parentage blend physical and spiritual interests and influences more vitally and completely than any other human relationship. If, therefore, any institution may be properly called sacred, with all the fulness of meaning that such an adjective ought to imply, it is the family, which is the cornerstone of the school, the church, the state, the nation.

Sociologists everywhere are emphasizing the importance of the family; indeed, it is largely to their studies that we are indebted for a more enlightened appreciation of this primary social group. They have shown us that society is not merely a formless mass of individuals, commingling promiscuously, but rather a vast tissue of families, each constituting a vital knot or nerve-center in the social organism. And those persons who have experience in the practical conduct of charitable, humane, or reformatory work are daily corroborating this testimony. One-half of the broken lives of the world are traceable to bad homes; and we can do little for the improvement of society without engaging somehow the co-operation of the home. The best thing we can do for children is to make good homes for them, or to approximate this as nearly as possible. A good home is the best moral insurance that any-

body can have. A man without a home is as badly off as "the man without a country." Whatever menaces the homes of a nation endangers every true interest in our civilization. Whatever promotes the security and happiness of the people's homes ministers directly to national welfare and human progress.

The educational function of the home is apparent as soon as we recognize the truth that education itself is a vital process, whose fruitage is the formation of character. Now when you reflect that the child is born into the home—at least, thank Heaven! the great majority of children are thus born—and that the characteristic tendencies which are to prevail throughout the remainder of life are chiefly determined within the first three or four years of that child's existence, while the influences of the next ten or twelve years are very potent and lasting, you can see at once that the home really contributes more than any other agency to the education of the child for good or evil. It is here in the social life of the family, with its daily experience of toil and responsibility, care and devotion, sympathy and ministry, sorrow and joy, love, hope, fear, wrong-doing, remorse, forgiveness—here in this little world of the home, half of earth and half of heaven, that a human soul is started on its eternal career; and while the baneful influence of a bad home may be largely overcome, and the helpful

influence of a good home greatly impaired, by what the after years shall bring, yet the impressions produced and the impulses given in this earliest of all schools are not likely ever to be wholly outgrown. After all, it is the home, more than school or church or state, that molds character in our boys and girls, our men and women.

Such being a hint of the social significance and the educational value of the home, we are ready to inquire a little more closely into the relations that ought to subsist between the Bible and the home.

Immediately I offer the general remark that one of the first conditions of a good home is a good spirit in the hearts of its inmates; and because the Bible is a great literature that breathes such a spirit with wonderful power, it would seem that it ought to have a large place of real influence, somehow, in every household whose members want their family life to be honorable, pure, and happy.

There have been thousands of such households that have thus welcomed the Bible and received its blessing. After its translation into the English language it entered the homes of English-speaking people, along with Protestant conceptions of religion, and was read with all the diligence, ardor, and devoutness which, under the conditions, that mighty spiritual awakening pro-

duced. Each home where earnest believers were found became a kind of sanctuary, domestic worship was established, and into the life of no people of modern times have the ideas and spirit of the Bible penetrated so deeply as into that of the English Puritans. Some of these came to America, bringing the Bible, with their grim acceptance of it and their inflexible purpose to found a state upon it; and, naturally, its dominant influence was felt everywhere. The custom of fireside worship, with morning and evening prayer and the reading of Scripture, was frequent if not general, and has descended even to very recent times. Doubtless you and I could tell of households in which these devotional exercises were a regular feature, or where they were at least occasional; and mayhap there are still a few such family sanctuaries, that have not yielded to the rush and superficiality of these more strenuous days, but maintain the hallowed usage of former generations.

As a rule, however, it is probably true, this ancient custom of domestic worship is rapidly disappearing in America. Indeed, it is not easy to see how it can survive for the majority of our people, until we learn how to live more simply, leisurely, and wisely. The industrial changes which have come over American society, the growth of cities and city habits, the influx of people from countries with alien ideals of religious

life, the rise of a vast educational system, the multitudinous products of the printing press, the increase of social organizations of all sorts, and the amplification of the work of the churches—these and other influences are so invading and assailing our homes as to leave scant opportunity for fireside prayer and the reading of the Bible, and in fact are destroying thousands of homes altogether, their inmates flying to the club, hotel, or boarding-house. Consequently worship has been transferred mainly to the church service, however frequently or infrequently attended; the study of the Bible has been handed over to the Sunday school, which is not equal to the task imposed upon it; and the Sacred Volume no longer exerts its potent influence directly in American households generally, as it did in the days of our forefathers. I do not forget the very large number of homes into which the Sunday-school children have carried the Bible, for the first time perhaps, nor those in which the "Home Department" of the Sunday school has promoted a study of the Bible every week by parents or other adults. Nevertheless, what I have said remains substantially true: the Bible has lost the place of honor and power which it once had in the majority of American households; at least this is my own apprehension of the existing situation.

Now what can be done to improve matters? Something, surely; much, I believe.

1. We must frankly recognize the change which has taken place, and acknowledge that in a measure it is a wholesome change. By this I mean that the Puritan use of the Bible, while salutary at the time, was too serious, intense, overstrained to last. The somber character of the Englishman took naturally to the solemn, sad, stern spirit of the old Hebrew prophets; and when the Bible was given to Englishmen in their native tongue, it so happened that they needed just such a resolute, rectifying, sanctifying influence. This was reinforced by the Calvinistic theology, and also by the severe conflicts and struggles of the period, not less for those who sought these shores than for those who remained to fight in Cromwell's army. But the austere mood could not be permanent, the rigor of Calvin's teaching had to relax, and the era of strife was bound to give way to a season of peace and prosperity. The age of the Puritans is gone; new conditions have arisen; new peoples are dwelling here; thought has broadened and mollified; new ideals of social life and religious duty are dawning; and the spirit which pressed the truths of the Bible into the very blood and marrow of our ancestors is no longer in the world or the Church to do the same for us. A larger, freer, fairer, happier life has come to the teeming multitudes of this land; and while the stupendous change has brought its incidental losses and en-

tails its great risks, yet on the whole it has been beneficial, not less for religion than for other abiding interests. Our first duty is to understand this fact.

2. Meanwhile the Bible has become vastly more interesting than it was two or three centuries ago. Scholars have brought a great light to shed upon its pages; the history with which it is connected and of which it forms a part has been made luminous, so that it reads like a brilliant fairy tale; and its spiritual treasures are now seen to be so rich and varied as to have a blessing for every man, every race, every nation that may be willing to receive them. We know more *about* the Bible than our ancestors did, even if we do not know so much *of* the Bible; and we need only to bring the two kinds of knowledge together, in order to enjoy the blessing of inspiration along with the blessing of information. Let us not forget to be duly thankful for the enormous enrichment of our intellectual life which modern biblical scholarship has rendered possible to each one of us, and which we have to use as an implement for the cultivation of a distinctively spiritual interest in the Bible on the part of the ignorant or the indifferent.

3. We have the Bible today in a much more convenient, attractive, and serviceable form than previous generations have possessed. This is really a great gain. The fine print of the small

Bibles of an earlier day gave them a forbidding appearance, and one wonders how it was possible to read them by candle light; surely, the fact that they were thus read attests the deep interest which Christian people had in the message of the Scriptures. But now, while small editions of the Bible, with necessarily fine print, still abound, there are so many other editions, in large, clear type, having the subject-matter suitably paragraphed, with page headings, references, and footnotes, that one need not experience any difficulty or incur a large expense in procuring a copy of the Sacred Volume which can be read with ease and pleasure. Some of the work of illustrating, commenting, and explaining is overdone, perhaps, so that the Scripture is not sufficiently allowed to speak for itself; but such is not always the case. For general uses, the American Revision is possibly the best; but Professor Moulton's "Modern Reader's Bible" is in every way admirable; while the Oxford editions and the Temple Bible, employing the Authorized Version, as well as the English Revision, are presented in convenient and attractive style. No excuse on the score of availability remains, therefore, for the neglect of Bible reading. Every household that really wants a copy of the Holy Scriptures can easily obtain it in these favored times, and can likewise obtain an abundant supply of helpful supplementary material.

4. With such advantages, the urgent need is to secure the interest and co-operation of parents. Here arises a great practical difficulty, at least in many cases, and in some instances the obstacles may be insurmountable. Thousands of parents are too busy with the pitiless struggle for subsistence to find either time or strength, to say nothing of inclination, for Bible reading with their children; other thousands are incompetent, intellectually or morally, to teach their children concerning the Bible or to lead them in reading and studying it; while, of course, others still are hostile to all religious matters. But, for the present, let us disregard these various classes, along with others that might be mentioned. Yet there will remain great numbers of parents who could find time and strength for such reading and study, and who would be competent to lead their children in the good work. The immediate problem is, How to enlist these. Some of them are church people; others, while non-attendants, are not unfriendly to the churches; and still others, who may never have thought about Christianity at all, could be interested if wisely and kindly approached. *How shall they be reached?*

Evidently here is a field for the Christian churches to cultivate; and one of the very first things to do is to seek, in all delicacy and kindliness, to impress upon parents a sense of their responsibility for the spiritual welfare of their

children not less than for the physical. Too often parents imagine that they do their whole duty in this respect by handing their children over to the Sunday school, supposing rather vaguely that the school will lead them into the church and make good Christians out of them. While such does, indeed, turn out, very frequently, to be the fortunate result, the plan quite as frequently miscarries. The work of the Sunday school, ordinarily, is woefully inadequate; and in any case it cannot absolve parents from their responsibility for the highest welfare of their offspring. Pastors and teachers need to learn, and are beginning to learn, that the better half of their work for the young consists in *deepening and strengthening the spiritual life of the home.*

This is to be done in two ways: first, by increasing, rather than relieving, the sense of parental responsibility; and, second, by carrying into the home the necessary practical help—sympathy, counsel, guidance, and copious material. Pastors and teachers must go to parents and say, substantially: "We are sincerely interested in the moral and religious education of your children; but we do not think it is right for us to seek to take this vital, sacred, delicate work out of your hands: for you are primarily responsible for their spiritual welfare, and no other agency can properly supplant the family relationship. But we want to help you in any and every pos-

sible way. What can we do for you? Let us send you an abundance of good materials, let us counsel with you, and let us together—family and church—do all we can to bring your children up to an enlightened, resolute, noble spiritual life and character!" Thus, in addition to bringing the children to the Sunday school and the church, there must be carried from this religious center a strong, steady influence to enrich the spiritual life of the family; and no ministry which the churches can perform in these days can be more salutary or promising.

Beginning on this basis, in this way, the Bible will come immediately into use as the one best instrument to serve the great end thus contemplated. Pastors, teachers, parents, and children will all turn at once to the moral and religious treasures contained in this spiritual storehouse. Then will come straightway the need of some plain, simple guide to the right use of the Bible —something, very primary perhaps, to help the parents understand what the Bible really is, why it should be read and studied, how interesting it may become, and just how to begin with it. For there can be no doubt that many parents today do not really know what to do with the Bible; they themselves are not familiar with its contents; and the rumors of the new views regarding it merely perplex them. Therefore they need primary instruction and guidance. It is not best

to read the Bible through by course, and it certainly is not profitable to try to read it all, especially to the young: how, then, shall one proceed?

Fortunately, at this point, we now have some helpful selections from the abundant and varied materials in the Scriptures. Two works already mentioned are very valuable, viz.: *The Bible for Children,* published by the Century Company, New York; and Walter L. Sheldon's *The Old Testament Bible Stories,* issued by W. M. Welch and Company, Chicago, the subject-matter in the latter work being somewhat paraphrased. Let parents take such volumes as these and read to their children, even at six or eight years of age, and then read with them; and later, but still at an early period, read directly from the Bible itself—reading, parents and children together, very freely and very copiously, and simply talking matters over without much preaching or didacticism. Let the Scriptures be read, and let them make their own impression. Such is a bare hint of a natural, wise method of procedure; and the counsel thus given has grown out of experience in just this method.

In a previous chapter of this work Professor Walter F. Adeney's *How to Read the Bible* has been warmly commended; and justly so. But some day we shall have a "Primary Guide to the Bible," for parents and teachers, which shall be

even more simple, which shall give specific directions, indicate courses of readings from the Scriptures, and bring the great spiritual influence of the Bible into more natural and vital contact with the life of today than the older conceptions and methods permitted.[1] Meanwhile, let pastors help their people to new and fresh ways of Bible reading, especially in the family circle; and in time there will result a spiritually enriched home life that will prove a baptism of the nation.

5. One further counsel remains to crown all that has been said. It is that the most vital and valuable influence in connection with the Bible in the home is the sincere desire and effort to translate its great message into life. The living exemplification of the best principles and spirit expressed in the Bible, the humble, honest attempt to shape one's own conduct and character by them, is the only sure way of realizing the blessings which the Scriptures can confer, and is the most potent means of commending them to

[1] Since the foregoing was written, there has come to hand *An Introduction to the Bible for Teachers of Children*, by Georgia Louise Chamberlin (University of Chicago Press). The little volume, of 206 pages, admirably fulfils the requirements indicated above. It is the outgrowth of the new learning regarding the Bible, and of practical experience in teaching young children. It gives parents and teachers very clearly the right point of view to start with; and then it furnishes a simple, fruitful scheme of lessons, with specific directions and suggestions, which can scarcely fail to prove as delightful as they must be instructive to old and young alike. Taking this *Introduction* in connection with Professor Adeney's work, any thoughtful parent or teacher may be sure of finding abundant profit in the new kind of study of the Bible which has been earnestly recommended in these pages.

others. They themselves tend directly to awaken such a desire, to produce such an effort; yet it is possible to read them very diligently, and flagrantly to disregard their holy teachings. If this be done by parents, the children will hardly be drawn to love the Bible. But if, on the contrary, parents do evidently and sincerely try to live the noble, righteous, merciful life which the great spirit of the Bible promotes, the young people who grow up in daily contact with such an example cannot fail to perceive the sources of this high influence. The Bible will grow dear to them as the fountain of life-giving waters, whose refreshing, cleansing, sustaining power they have seen demonstrated in the lives of their parents, amid the varied experiences of joy and sorrow, struggle and triumph, which come more or less to every household. Nothing can take the place of the living exemplification of the principles and spirit of true morality and religion—no precepts, no rites and ceremonies, no dogmas and institutions. The power of the Bible to beget an honest effort toward such an exemplification is its greatest power; and the atmosphere which is thus created in a home is the most beautiful, blessed, and far-reaching influence that may serve to shape the development of childhood in a spiritual direction.

The next forward step in moral and religious

education should be—let us trust that it will be —to try to help the home to fulfil its true function in this respect. Perhaps the largest uncultivated field lying before the churches of America is the field of spiritual home-making. Every church might well maintain a ministry for this particular service, might well employ, at a good salary, an educated woman, with the heart of a consecrated pastor and the training of a high-grade teacher, to go into each and every home on this very errand, offering intelligent aid to the parents in the matter of Bible reading or study, carrying helpful books, giving sympathetic counsel, yet respecting (as a true pastor would do) all the delicate privacies of the household, and aiming only to enlighten and enrich the spiritual life of the family. Surely, if such a work could be done in a million homes in America—and why not in ten million?—the moral problems that now baffle us would be in a fair way of solution within another generation. Is it possible that here lies the grandest opportunity of the Christian churches of our country today? And may not educators and ministers, with intelligent parents generally, well counsel together with reference to adequate measures for meeting this great need?

CHAPTER XVI

THE BIBLE AND PERSONAL CULTURE

The new appreciation of the Bible which has been portrayed in the preceding chapters may fitly culminate in a fresh estimate of this great literature as a means of personal culture. How is it related to life in its broadest and best development? Is it archaic, anachronistic, out of touch with the real interests of the modern world? Or, on the contrary, has it a message, a spirit, a power of enduring charm and vitality? If so, how may the individual avail himself of the secret which it waits to yield for the enrichment and glorification of his soul?

It all comes to this issue at last. We are personal beings, and the personal factor in the equation is determinative here as elsewhere. What you and I care about the Bible, what we propose to do with it, and what it will do for us if we cherish it and seek its blessing—this is the pivotal question in the whole study which we have been pursuing. Like all other treasures, whether of learning or of wealth, the spiritual riches of the Bible can neither become ours nor be given by us to others until we resolve, each for himself, to lay hold of them and acquire them by rightful conquest. We must pay a price for them in honest effort, study, assimilative appro-

priation. It is the value of the Bible to you and me that most concerns you and me; and it is what you and I need to do in order to extract that value that ought to command our keenest attention.

I shall speak of culture in a comprehensive way, as implying generally what we mean by the enlightenment, refinement, and discipline of the human spirit. Matthew Arnold's definition of culture as "knowing the best that has been thought and said in the world," though a liberal one, seems to me inadequate; while his other remark, that "culture is reading, but reading with a purpose to guide it, and with system," [1] appears to give a still narrower conception, although he does well to insist upon the specific idea that "true culture implies not only knowledge, but right tact and justness of judgment, forming themselves by and with knowledge." [2] A better account of culture is contained in the words of Principal J. C. Shairp:

> When applied to the human being, it means, I suppose, the "educing or drawing forth all that is potentially in a man," the training all the energies and capacities of his being to the highest pitch, and directing them to their true ends. . . . . But culture is not a product of mere study. Learning may be got from books, but not culture. It is a more living process, and requires that the student shall at times close his books, leave his solitary room, and mingle with his fellow-men. He must seek the inter-

[1] *Literature and Dogma*, p. xxvii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xxvi.

course of living hearts as well as of dead books—especially the companionship of those of his own contemporaries whose minds and characters are fitted to instruct, elevate and sweeten his own. Another thing required is the discipline which must be carried on by each man in himself, the learning of self-control, the forming of habits, the effort to overcome what is evil and to strengthen what is good in his own nature.[8]

I like this view of culture because it presents the two aspects which I conceive that real culture must always exhibit—influence from others, and self-exertion; the essential result of which is character, formed upon the material afforded by nature, and consisting of intelligence, beauty, virtue, and strength.

Now if this conception is a just one, as I think it is, there ought to be no difficulty in showing how the Bible contributes to personal culture, that is, to the enlightenment, refinement and discipline of the human spirit.

I. It contributes to the intellectual element in culture in several important ways.

1. It gives the reader who familiarizes himself with its pages an increase of knowledge and an enlargement of thought. Taking up the Bible simply as literature, and perusing it, not for purposes of study or criticism, but for instruction and enjoyment, just as one might read Homer or Shakespeare—naturally, receptively, sympathetically—one cannot fail to acquire, in the course of years, a very considerable amount of valuable

[8] *Culture and Religion*, pp. 19, 20.

information; not merely that curious information about the land, climate, plants and animals of Palestine which some minds like to gather, but rather a knowledge of the history of nations and of ancient civilizations, of the character of different peoples, of the dominant ideas and the distinctive achievements of those great races that filled the world with power and glory in the long ago. This, assuredly, is a part of true culture; it makes one intelligent respecting some of the chief events of the past, and it broadens one's thought of human nature and the vast stage on which the conspicuous figures of antiquity played their various rôles. Thus Egypt, Chaldea, Assyria, Babylonia, Media, Persia, Syria, Phœnicia, Macedonia, Greece, and Rome, along with Israel and Arabia, come before the reader, grow distinct, and present many a chapter of thrilling interest in the early history of mankind. Nor can a thoughtful person stop here. Because the Bible makes him know something of the beginnings of Christianity, he is led on to learn something of its subsequent fortunes; and so he is inevitably brought to acquaint himself, at least in outline, with the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, the rise of European nations, and those stupendous struggles of western Christendom which make up the fascinating, impressive story of the last sixteen hundred years. Surely, if the Bible student gets even a glimpse of such a grand pan-

orama, he obtains a wider view than any other literature can afford; and no one can read understandingly any other literature that deals with it if he be wholly ignorant of the Bible. The Bible lies at the heart of history, and the life-blood of nations has surged through it. Therefore to know the Bible is to know, or to be led to know, the inmost meaning of history.

2. The Bible also imparts a degree of elevation to the mind which gives dignity to culture, and a degree of insight which interprets knowledge and makes culture a joy. The loftiness of the themes with which it is occupied, the stateliness of its language, and the penetration of the views of life and character which it presents conspire to lift the thought of the reader to a high plane, and to reveal the inner significance of human conduct and national developments. "I must confess to you," said Rousseau, "that the majesty of the Scriptures astonishes me; the holiness of the Evangelists speaks to my heart and has such striking characters of truth, and is, moreover, so perfectly inimitable, that if it had been the invention of men, the inventors would be greater than the greatest heroes." [4] And Goethe wrote: "When, in my youth, my imagination, ever active, bore me away, now hither, now thither, and when all this blending of history and fable, of mythology and religion, threatened to unsettle my mind, gladly then did I flee to-

[4] Quoted by Farrar in *The Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy.*

ward those eastern countries. I buried myself in the first books of Moses, and there, amidst those wandering tribes, I found myself at once in the grandest of solitudes and in the grandest of societies." [5] Likewise Heinrich Heine exclaimed: "What a book! Vast and wide as the world! rooted in the abysses of creation, and towering up beyond the blue secrets of heaven! Sunrise and sunset, birth and death, promise and fulfilment, the whole drama of Humanity are all in this book!" [6] Surely, a literature that can so exalt the mind, and so clarify and deepen its insight, as to draw forth such judgments from such men is of sufficient grandeur and value to be most highly esteemed merely as a means of intellectual culture.

II. Not less important is the contribution of the Bible to the moral side of culture.

1. The strongly ethical quality that pervades the Scriptures pours a tide of moral influence over the mind and heart of the reader which awakens, vivifies, and purifies all his moral impulses. Because the writers of the Bible were so powerfully possessed by the ethical spirit, their works appeal to the deepest moral instincts in us; their portrayal of character in the various personages of whom they make mention, and their interpretation of the fortunes of their nation, are nearly always profoundly ethical; and

[5] Quoted by Farrar, *op. cit.*

[6] *Ibid.*

we cannot read their words, whether of narrative or of prophecy or of poetry, without experiencing a stir of conscience, a quickening of the sense of right and wrong, which brings us to a clearer moral consciousness than we had before, and makes us feel that righteousness and wickedness are great, solemn realities in human life. Consequently everywhere the Bible goes among men it produces, if they be led to read it, a tremendous moral impression,—an awakenment, vivification, and purification of the moral sense that is the most rectifying influence which has ever been exerted upon individuals or nations. What Mr. Walter L. Sheldon says of the value of the Bible in this respect, with reference to the moral education of children, is applicable to all childlike races and to mankind in general:

> The beauty of the Bible tales for little ones is that the moral points are so pronounced. The lessons come out in large letters or heavy type and can be seen almost without comment. . . . . These tales emphasize on a large scale the awfulness of the vices or of the evil passions. It is the evil of pride, for instance, which is brought out over and over again; or the iniquity of stealing; or the baseness of being untrue to one's home or family. In this way at the very outset, before we have gone into any subtle analysis, we can make the little ones feel the horror of evil conduct, turning their minds with a revulsion against stealing or murder, against jealousy, envy, pride, wilfulness and disobedience. Respect for life and property, regard for parents, loyalty to the family, submission to the law of the State—these are the virtues which stand out so boldly in the Old Testament.[1]

[1] *An Ethical Sunday School*, pp. 44, 45.

2. But not only does the Bible thus impress and awaken the soul morally, it also moves the will and leads to action. Nature gives every one of us the moral sense, but in many men it is feeble, and in all it is a long time in coming to its rightful supremacy; the will is not easily brought into submission to the august authority of conscience. Now the Bible not only educates the conscience by quickening, developing, and strengthening it; it also educates the will by touching the motives, inspiring self-exertion, guiding action, and training the powers of body and mind to be in subjection to the law of righteousness engraved upon the tablets of the soul. The Bible has been called a literature of power. It is such because it moves us, sways us, prompts, restrains, urges, checks, guides, and sustains us in our efforts to realize an ideal excellence which it keeps before us. It shows us the way of duty, it reinforces our instinctive apprehension of its solemn mandate, and it presents the highest considerations which may incite us to noble endeavor after worthy ends. And, surely, there can be no true culture that does not go beyond mere contemplation, and issue in conduct and character. I cannot regard him as justly entitled to be called a cultivated man in whom one whole side of his nature is barren. Unless the energies of one's being produce, in some degree, the fair fruits of good deeds, the

noblest of all qualities, virtue, I think enlightenment and refinement fall very far short of having their perfect work. And whoever allows this element its due place in culture will easily agree with Matthew Arnold in putting a high estimate upon the Bible as a means of moral education. "As well imagine a man," says he, "with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the help of the remains of Greek art, and a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespeare, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible." [8]

III. Another element in culture to which the Bible renders a potent ministry is the distinctively religious. We are in the habit of separating morality and religion, and in a measure this is permissible and perhaps needful. Yet the Bible does not divorce them, but rather unites them; and the result is that it gives the world an ethical religion or a religious morality, to the enormous advantage of all the interests concerned. But, speaking here of religion distinctively, emphasizing its God-ward side, I affirm, and probably no one would deny, that the Bible brings us the greatest help in this respect to be found in all literature.

1. It stimulates and arouses the religious instinct that is native to every human soul. It is so full of the religious spirit—deep, strong, ex-

[8] Quoted by Farrar, *op. cit.*

alted—that no man can read its pages for an hour without awakening the religious sentiment from its too constant slumber, and taking new thought for divine things, and feeling that he is a subject in the kingdom of God, whose holy laws it is his business to obey. It quickens and develops, in at least some slight degree, in every soul that receives its great teachings, the beautiful qualities of reverence, aspiration, trust, hope, courage, along with humility, conviction of sin, penitence, a yearning for pardon and inner peace, and a gracious resignation to the will of Heaven that means, not a weak surrender or a Stoic fortitude, but a calm patience, a brave confidence, and an unshaken strength in the heart. Who can point to any other writings which produce such an effect to so great an extent? The whole world of literature does not contain them; and were this "river of the water of life" withdrawn, our souls would be quickly parched and the religious beauty of our civilization would soon vanish.

2. The Bible also spiritualizes religion. Beginning with crude, anthropomorphic ideas of God, in the midst of polytheistic teachings, the stream of this literature flows along with the course of national development, and purifies itself by dropping its sediment of gross materialism, until in the New Testament—yes, even quite early in the Old Testament—it presents us with

a pure monotheism, and inculcates a worship that is mainly of the heart and life. To be sure, rites and ceremonies, temples and sacrifices, laws and ordinances are conspicuous, and at first may seem to be all-important; yet as one reads attentively and becomes familiar with the ruling ideas in this great literature, he finds that, beneath and behind all ceremonial requirements, the one thing demanded of the individual and the nation is purity of heart and uprightness of life. Oblations are vain without this, even in the Old Testament; and in the New Testament external forms fall into complete subordination, and religion is lifted into a region of wonderful vitality, freedom, and inspiring power. Nowhere among all the shrines, cults, and sacred scriptures of mankind can we find loftier spiritual conceptions of the Divine Government, or stronger influences making for righteousness and true holiness, or a sweeter spirit of grace and truth, of majesty and love, than we see and feel emanating from this Book of books. It is the most potent instrument we possess for the spiritualization of religion, the spiritualization of civilization, and the ultimate spiritualization of the world.

IV. There is still one other element of culture to which I must allude as benefiting by the influence of the Bible. I refer to what I may call self-discipline and social service. The Bible teaches the great, twofold lesson of self-control

and altruism. It makes a man ashamed of his sins; brings him to his knees in penitence and prayer; and then lifts him up and starts him out to try to be more worthy of himself by curbing his evil propensities, by compelling his conduct, speech, and thoughts into the way of God's commandments, and by showing him the highest ideal of character he has ever seen. Then it drives home into his moral consciousness the duty of consideration for others—the truth that "no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself;" that the claims of society upon every man are solemn and divine claims, not to be put aside; that justice, mercy, and peace are obligations as holy as those of worship—that, in short, "all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

By inculcating such ideas and principles the Bible tends to help men to self-government, self-direction, self-attainment, and at the same time helps them to devote themselves to every noble interest or enterprise concerning the betterment of the world. As a result strong characters are produced, and society is continually improved. Men who are free, and yet obedient to the divine behest, spring up; and they, living in the world yet above it, promote every effort to lift the world to a higher plane. Thus education, philanthropy, reform, missions, and all other humanitarian works are legitimate fruits of the dis-

ciplining, altruistic influence of the Bible upon men's hearts. Assuredly this is culture for the individual and culture for society.

No thought has been more frequently or forcibly expressed in college commencement sermons and orations, in recent years, than that of the duty of educated men to engage in social service. They have been urged to devote their talents and learning to the improvement of politics, the better administration of the civil service, municipal reform, the wise relief of the poor, and the uplift of the lowly in general. Such an unselfish ministry is but a proper return to society at large for the advantages which educated young people have received; and the fate of many of the highest interests of our present civilization depends upon the response which the intelligent, disciplined, favored classes in American society shall make to this great demand. But how shall such classes find adequate motive for all this? What shall keep culture from becoming selfish? Enlightenment and refinement alone will not do this; as witness the experience of Greece. It is doubtful, too, whether modern sociology, with all its economic and political implications and considerations, will suffice for so exalted an aim as must be cherished by those who would redeem the world from its bondage to evil. At any rate, it is certain that all other inducements and promptings in this direction are

powerfully reinforced by the noble moral, religious, and humanitarian appeals which the Bible makes to the souls of men. Its supreme teaching that God is not only righteous but merciful, and requires both righteousness and mercy of his children, glows upon almost every page; and when it culminates in the two great commandments given by Jesus, love to God and love to man, as the sum and substance of all true morality and all vital religion, we begin to get a new conception of the social *ought,* and can understand Paul's word: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." [9] Thus the sense of social sympathy and the spirit of kindness, which are rooted in the very nature of the soul, are supplemented and strengthened by the highest ethical and religious injunctions, so that a man feels himself *called of God* to spend and be spent in the helpful service of his needy fellow-men. Here, therefore, is motive, ample and strong, for the most unselfish, heroic, consecrated labor that any man, however gifted, can perform. Who can measure the value of such high sanctions, reinforcing all other claims, appeals, and considerations, prompting talented people to throw themselves into the vast enterprise of a world's true salvation? And how shall we give social effect to all the learning of these days, to all the favors enjoyed by the educated classes, unless

[9] Rom. xv. 1. See also Gal. v. 13–15; vi. 1–10; Eph. iv., etc.

each individual thus blessed shall be moved to give himself somehow in voice and loving ministry to human need? If the Bible did nothing else but to inspire to such a ministry, it would be well worth all it has cost the world. And what nobler element of culture can come to any man than the strength of character, the breadth of view, the depth of feeling, and the richness of spiritual experience which must inevitably result from such energetic, altruistic, and reverent social service as the Holy Scriptures thus lead him to render?

V. In conclusion, we must not forget that the culture which the Bible imparts—the enlightenment, refinement, and discipline of the human spirit—is, if the hope of immortality be valid, the best preparation we can have for the Great Beyond. One does not need to preach here, in order to enforce this truth; and although the interest in the question of a future life may not be so keen today as it has sometimes been, partly because this present world is more comfortable than it used to be, it is nevertheless far from being "a negligible quantity" for thoughtful minds. And the point here insisted upon is simply that, if we are to live hereafter, the culture which the Bible furnishes is truly the culture of eternal life. "We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we can carry nothing out" except ourselves and our most vital, most personal

acquisitions. "The fruit of the spirit" is the only fruit which we shall bear away from the fields of our earthly experience. The riches of the soul are the only enduring riches. The moment comes, soon or late, when every man begins to think about these. Jesus Christ sought to confer his greatest benefit upon the individual heart by helping it to attain to "eternal life"—the life of the eternal part of human nature. His teaching and ministry in this respect are full of solemn significance to one who tries to appreciate the true greatness of life, who desires to realize the blessings of true personal culture. The cultivation of the heart, the enrichment of the soul "toward God," the development of the love of God, including the love of all goodness, all beauty, all holiness—this is a kind of culture that not only crowns our present existence with glory and honor, but involves (if anything does) "the power of an endless life." So the Bible, by helping us to gain this supreme wealth, this finest, purest spiritual discipline, not only fits us for our best usefulness here, but (so far as we can see) gives us the best preparation we can have for the unknown privileges and possibilities of the great, wonderful spirit world. For it is written, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

CHAPTER XVII

THE BIBLE AND THE SPREAD OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

There are three principal spheres for the influence of the Bible—the individual, the social, and the universal. At least it may promote clear thought to distinguish such spheres, although of course they overlap one another and are interdependent. The primary and chief service which the Scriptures render is always a personal one, consisting in the vital, spiritual improvement of each man, woman, or child who really receives their great message. Their secondary service is rendered to society within the immediate circles where they have been long and best known, and consists in helping powerfully to maintain the exalted ideals and the wholesome tendencies of those social institutions which have grown up, in no small degree, under their inspiration. But beyond all this they have a third ministry to perform to the vast world lying outside the boundaries of Judaism and Christianity, and it consists essentially in the moral and religious illumination and purification of nearly a thousand million human beings who have not yet been effectually reached by their life-giving teachings.

Those people who have most thoroughly ex-

perienced the helpfulness of the Bible to the individual soul, and those communities or nations that have most surely demonstrated its social value, in contributing to the production of the beneficent institutions of modern civilization, must be the most keenly interested in studying the relation which this wonderful Book bears to the extension of this civilization over the face of the earth. For precisely here lies the greatest fact of the present age, namely, that our modern civilization is now spreading throughout the world. Accordingly it will be highly profitable to glance at the developments which have brought about the existing situation, so marvelous and so promising; to look somewhat closely at the character of the civilization referred to; and then to consider the peculiar function of the Bible as a factor in universal human progress.

I. The dominant note in the public affairs of the world today is internationalism. All countries are open, all races are flowing together, travel and commerce extend everywhere, and intercommunication is rapid and constant. The so-called Great Powers have been recently expanding, or striving to expand, in every possible way—acquiring control of new regions, increasing their military and naval equipment on a gigantic scale, seeking likewise to increase their wealth, and also augmenting their educational

resources. While this expansion presents one of its most notable instances in the case of Japan, an oriental nation, and another striking example in the case of Russia, which may be said to be half oriental, it has been mainly conspicuous on the part of such western countries as Germany, France, Great Britain, and the United States of America. The result is that we now see India and Egypt occupied and governed by Great Britain; South Africa largely under her control, and the rest of the Dark Continent opening to European colonization; Australia and her neighboring islands growing in population, wealth, and power; Japan surprisingly awakened to a new day and a career of marvelous promise; China opened to commerce and new industries, and apparently on the eve of momentous developments; Russia pushing her interests eastward, inviting peasant farmers to her millions of acres of agricultural lands in Siberia, and just at present the scene of critical social struggles; the American Republic lately thrust into a larger sphere of influence in the Far East as well as nearer home, and undoubtedly destined henceforth to play a more prominent part in the drama of nations; and South America beginning to make her vast resources known, and likely to have increasing trade relations with the Anglo-Saxon peoples on both sides of the Atlantic. How remarkable is all this! What a new face it puts upon the world,

as compared with a century or even a half-century ago! And how untold are the possiblities which it portends!

Many factors have contributed to these wonderful results. Scientific discoveries and mechanical inventions have been, without doubt, the most effective. The mariner's compass, gunpowder, the printing press, paper, the steam engine, and the electric telegraph have been the principal agencies which have enabled the modern man to overrun the earth, and have produced the varied and enormous material expansion of the present era. The following significant facts, cited from a recent magazine article,[1] afford a glimpse of the vast change which is rapidly taking place:

One may now go from Glasgow to Stanley Falls, in Africa, in forty-three days. Already there are forty-six steamers on the Upper Congo, and the railroad running northward from Cape Town is being pushed so rapidly that the British Association for the Advancement of Science has been invited to meet, in 1905, at Victoria Falls. Within a few years the Englishman's dream will be realized in a railroad from Cairo to the Cape. Already the distance is half covered. Uganda is reached by rail, and sleeping and dining cars safely run the 575 miles from Cairo to Khartum, where, only five years ago Kitchener fought the savage hordes of the Mahdi.

Japan, which, fifty years ago, did not own even a Jinrikisha, now has 4,237 miles of well managed railroad, while India is gridironed by 25,373 miles of steel rails, which carry 195,000,000 passengers annually.

[1] Arthur Judson Brown, "The Opened World," *The American Monthly Review of Reviews*, October, 1904.

According to Walter J. Ballard, the aggregate capital invested in railways at the end of 1902 was $36,850,000,000, and the total mileage was 532,500, distributed as follows:

United States	202,471 miles
Europe	180,708 "
Asia	41,814 "
South America	28,654 "
North America (except United States)	24,032 "
Australia	15,649 "
Africa	14,187 "

Telegraph lines belt the globe, enabling even the provincial journals to print the news of the entire world during the preceding twenty-four hours. . . . . The total length of all telegraph lines in the world is 4,908,921 miles, the nerves of our modern civilization.

The submarine cables aggregate 1,751 in number, and over 200,000 miles in length, and annually transmit more than 6,000,000 messages, annihilating the time and distance which formerly separated nations.

Commerce has taken swift and massive advantage of these facilities for intercommunication. Its ships whiten every sea. The products of European and American manufacture are flooding the earth. The United States Treasury Bureau of Statistics estimates that the value of the manufactured articles which enter into the international commerce of the world is $4,000,000,000, and that of this vast total the United States furnished $400,000,000, its foreign trade having increased over 100 per cent. since 1895.

And these are only a few illustrations of the changes that are taking place all over the world. "The swift ships of commerce," says Dr. Josiah Strong, "are mighty shuttles which are weaving the nations together into one great web of life."

Other influences have been at work toward the same grand end—but it must suffice merely to mention them—such as curiosity and the love of adventure and of knowledge, leading to ex-

ploration and travel; philanthropy, bringing about international assemblages; scholarship, establishing worldwide intellectual communions; literature; international politics and law; and, last but surely not least, religious devotion and enterprise, creating extensive inter-racial missionary operations.

Thus the world which lies open at the beginning of the twentieth century is practically the entire world, and the mighty currents of our western civilization are destined henceforth to lave the shores of all lands. No movement in the whole history of mankind was ever fraught with such stupendous possibilities.

II. At this point we may properly examine the character of our western civilization, now brought to so unparalleled a juncture. A complete account of it cannot be given in a few pages, but its most essential traits may be indicated at least.

1. Of course it is the *youngest* civilization, being "—heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time." The modern nations of western Europe, mainly of Teutonic stock, together with the mixed populations of America, are still youthful as compared with the races of the Orient. Fifteen centuries at most comprise the period of their growing prominence and power, their developing institutions, their unfolding ideas and ideals. Indeed, one-third of this

stretch of time may be said to cover all the notable, and therefore truly characteristic, products or manifestations of our strictly modern civilization. Back of the age of the Renaissance it is the ancient order, the mind of antiquity, that still reigns. It is only since the Renaissance that western civilization may be properly said to have realized itself and to have come to anything like maturity and legitimate fruitfulness. This general fact shows how recent in the world's history are the social and political institutions, the literature and art, the learning and educational enterprise, the science and industry which belong peculiarly to the Occident and which mark so strikingly the present age.

Yet, though seen thus to be young, our western civilization, in the sense here spoken of, is itself the product, in large degree, of influences vastly older. That is to say, it enjoys a rich heritage from a long past. The languages and histories, the mythologies and religions, the philosophies and laws, the arts and customs of Rome and Greece, even of Egypt and Babylon, and most certainly of Israel, have contributed wonderfully, both in letter and in spirit, to the molding of this latest-born type of social life. Upon a fresh stock of race-material these ancient grafts have been made, with the happy result that the fruits thus produced are a blending of the good qualities, with less of the bad also, of

both antiquity and modernity. It is impossible to separate, or always to distinguish, these various commingling streams of influence flowing from out the past into the present; but it is cause for profound gratitude and high hope that they are real and mighty forces in the life of our time, so making our western civilization cumulative in spiritual wealth and power.

2. Because this civilization is young and has been so enriched by older civilizations, it is full of fresh *energy*. It is not stagnant, it presents no signs of senility, it is rather surprisingly alert, enterprising, and progressive. It displays activity everywhere, with increasing intensity—so much so, indeed, that this aspect is often the first to strike, and not altogether favorably, an intelligent visitor from the Orient in the western countries. Said an educated Japanese to a New England college president lately: "Can we have all these material equipments and conveniences —your railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and buildings—without your American hurry?" Undesirable as the "hurry" is, which must eventually slow down, we must recognize the fact that it springs out of certain racial endowments, doubtless stimulated, if not generated, by climatic conditions, which have given strength and achievement to the peoples that most truly represent this civilization.

The native Teutonic habit of mind, underlying the

English, American, and German character, represents of necessity, certain qualities—tenacity of purpose, determination in the presence of oppostion, love for action, and hunger for power, all tending to express themselves through the State—which were the necessary equipment of that military type which has won in the supreme stress of Natural Selection its right of place as the only type able to hold the stage of the world in the long epoch during which the present is destined to pass under the control of the future.[2]

The energy yielded by these natural traits—"tenacity of purpose, determination in the presence of opposition, love for action, and hunger for power"—which formerly exercised itself in military directions chiefly, and later in political, is now flowing mainly in other channels,—industrial, commercial, educational, scientific. The result is a rapid and enormous increase of population and wealth. Mr. Benjamin Kidd, in the work just cited, says:

During a brief period of some two hundred years, our western world has been transformed. The increase in natural resources, in wealth, in population, and in the distance which has been placed between our modern civilization and any past condition of the race, has been enormous. During the last half of this period, that is to say, during the nineteenth century alone, while the population of the rest of the world remained nearly stationary, the actual numbers of the European peoples rose from 170,000,000 to 500,000,000. . . . . These figures are to be taken only as an index to the stupendous changes which have taken place, and which are still in progress, beneath the surface of life and thought throughout the entire fabric of our civilization. It matters not in what direction we look, the character of the revolution which has been effected is the

[2] Benjamin Kidd, *Western Civilization*, p. 372.

same. In inventions, in commerce, in the arts of civilized life, in most of the theoretical and applied sciences, and in nearly every department of investigation and research, the progress of western knowledge and equipment during the period in question has been striking beyond comparison. In many directions it has been so great that it undoubtedly exceeds in this brief period the sum of all the previous advance made by the race.[2]

3. The fresh, abundant energy of our western civilization, thus expressing itself in manifold forms of expansion and production, is supplemented by another characteristic element of great value, namely, *liberality*. It is inherently democratic, fraternal, co-operative. To be sure, this trait or tendency has not been fully wrought out as yet; and crudeness, selfishness, even violence and oppression, contradicting the claim of liberality, may be all too frequently pointed out. Nevertheless at heart the whole western movement is essentially democratic; it is a fruit of the rising spirit of liberty in ever-widening circles of society; and that spirit both compels and concedes, in the last analysis, mutual tolerance and respect. It inspires the individual to fight, if need be, for his own rights; but it makes him learn by the very exigency of the contest that others also have rights. And while it is sadly true that some of the peoples who have had most to do in extending western civilization into remote and alien regions—as in India and Africa, for instance—have exercised their power sometimes with a

[2] *Western Civilization*, pp. 346, 347.

ruthless disregard of the interests of weaker races, so that the march of this civilization has often been a bloody conquest, yet instinctively and on the whole the advance has meant and brought good rather than evil. Despite a host of facts which seem to give the lie to the assertion, the dominant ideal among English-speaking people is that which embraces the great principles of liberty, brotherhood, equality, co-operation. The ideal is far, very far, from perfect realization, save perhaps within few and limited circles; but it lives in the souls of men, it floats before the whole western world, and such progress as is actually accomplished is in the direction of its further realization.

It is because of the potency of this ideal, the vital strength of the democratic impulse, gradually making itself felt throughout our western civilization, that there has been so remarkable a liberalizing process in the progress of the nineteenth century. Here again Mr. Kidd's words may be fitly quoted:

> This vast advance has been accompanied by conditions of the rapid disintegration of all absolutisms within which the human spirit had hitherto been confined. . . . . It has been the age of the unfettering of discussion and of competition; of the enfranchisement of the individual, of classes, of parties, of opinions, of commerce, of industry, and of thought. Into the resulting conditions of the social order all the forces, powers, and equipments of human nature have been unloosed. It has been the age of the development throughout our civilization of the con-

ditions of such rivalry and strenuousness, of such conflict and stress, as has never prevailed in the world before. . . . . It is not into the end but into the beginning of an era that we have been born. . . . . We are living in the midst of a system of things by the side of which no other system will in the end survive as a rival in the world.[4]

Here, then, we see the three distinguishing characteristics of western civilization, especially as exhibited by the English-speaking peoples, to wit: first, its youthfulness, implying a rich heritage from the long past; second, its fresh, abundant energy, leading to manifold forms of expansion and production; and, third, its liberal, democratic, fraternal spirit, conducing to a growing freedom for the individual, a growing equality of conditions and opportunities, an increasing sense of human brotherhood, and the beginning of a worldwide co-operation for security, peace, and universal improvement. Although the last-mentioned quality may seem somewhat imaginary to many readers, and although it is freely conceded to be largely ideal as yet, nevertheless it is a very vital and potent ideal, which will be slowly but grandly realized as our civilization advances toward its legitimate goal. And in considering so stupendous a movement as the development and trend of this mighty civilization, with particular reference to its very highest traits, we shall do well to

[4] *Western Civilization*, pp. 347–49.

ponder the words of Professor Franklin H. Giddings:

> Every nation that has played an important part in the elevation of mankind from barbarism to enlightenment, from despotism to civil liberty, from ruthless cruelty to compassion and fraternity, has begun its career with a magnificent display of power, has continued it in the lust of wealth, has learned the lessons of restraint and sacrifice, and at length has come to some appreciation of the infinite capacities, the immeasurable potential value of the human soul. It has begun with conquest; but it has crowned its career with mercy and beneficence.[5]

Duly studying the history and drift of western civilization in the light of this remark, and granting vast imperfections and short-comings as yet in the working-out of its inherent tendencies, we can scarcely hesitate to agree with Professor Giddings in his further assertion, that a prominent

> characteristic of the highest ideal in its modern form is its content of ardent and generous feeling. It desires the widest opportunity and the highest attainment, not merely for the few, but equally for all classes and all races. It is vital with philanthropic interest and missionary earnestness. It is thoroughly democratic, and includes an unbounded faith in the future of the people.[6]

III. Now we are prepared to consider the relation of the Bible to these most significant facts. We have seen that our western civilization is going out through all the earth, and its words to the end of the world; and that its three dominant

[5] In *Democracy and Empire* (Macmillan Co., 1900), p. 315.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 335. See whole chapter.

characteristics are its youthfulness, its vigor, and its liberality. Under the figure of a gracious queen, it may be said that her feet are wet with the dew of the morning, that her countenance is radiant with the sunshine of a new day, and that her soul is aflame with the essential spirit of the kingdom of heaven. How is the Bible concerned in her mission among the nations?

Broadly speaking, the answer to this question will be found to lie in the influence of the Bible upon the ideals of mankind, just touched upon in the foregoing paragraphs. And here let one more word be quoted from Professor Giddings:

> The creation of ideals is one of the highest activities of the human mind. Into his ideals enters man's estimate of the past and his forecast of the future; his scientific analysis, and his poetic feeling; his soberest judgment, and his religious aspiration. Yet in the growth of the most spiritual ideal, as in that of the humblest material organism, we have a perfect illustration of the laws of evolution. The ideal, no less than any phenomenon of physical life, is a product of ceaseless transformations of energy, of continual re-groupings of things, of an endless struggle for existence. . . . . This continuity of its evolution is the spiritual thread of history; it is the succession and combination of historic themes. . . . . Egypt and Babylonia created the national ideals of power and splendor; Iran and Judea of ceremonial righteousness; Greece created the ideal of citizenship; Rome the ideal of justice. England has created the ideal of civil liberty; France the ideal of social equality. America is slowly but surely creating the ideal of a broad and perfect equity, in which liberty and equality shall for all time be reconciled and combined.[1]

[1] *Democracy and Empire*, pp. 339, 340.

Now we may clearly perceive the specific bearings of the great truth which this chapter is elucidating.

1. The Bible has been, unquestionably, a powerful instrument in the *formation* of the best ideals of our western civilization. It was a large factor in furnishing the ideas and in shaping the policy of the rising Roman Catholic Church in the early Middle Ages; it was the chief fountain of inspiration for the Reformers; and its influence has entered most vitally, profoundly, and pervasively into the thought, faith, conduct, and social organization of all Protestant Christendom. Its stamp can be traced, not only upon religious forms, dogmas, and institutions, but also upon art, philosophy, education, literature, law, politics, and domestic customs. It has reached the heart of our civilization as nothing else has done, voicing its aspiration, molding its hopes and fears, and guiding its humanitarian and spiritual impulses; until we may justly claim that our very highest and purest conceptions of what life ought to be, for the individual and for society, for the nation and for the world, even for the present and for the future, are begotten of this ancient, mighty, and holy literature.

2. No sane man, acquainted with the best things in our western civilization, can doubt that the Bible will continue to be one of the greatest agencies available for *maintaining* our

noblest ideals. Having been so potent in their formation, it will be further potent in their perpetuation, albeit in modified ways. Some of the dark, false, baneful conceptions and influences which have accompanied these ideals in the past, drawn from or buttressed by the Bible, because men have misunderstood and misapplied its contents, will fall away; but the clarified stream of its moral and religious power will still flow forth into the teeming life of the modern age, quickening every good impulse of the human heart and prompting to every good work. The task of adequately maintaining thus all that is true and valuable in our spiritual life, appreciating our great heritage, our precious privileges, and our solemn responsibilities, so that the peoples of the western world may not retrograde, but may fulfil their sublime mission among the nations—this task is most serious and important. In the words of President Roosevelt:

> In the last analysis the work of statesmen and soldiers, the work of the public man, shall go for nothing if it is not based on the spirit of Christianity working in the millions of homes throughout this country; so that there may be that social, that spiritual, that moral foundation without which no country can ever rise to permanent greatness. For material well-being, material prosperity, success in arts, in letters, great industrial triumphs, all of them, and all of the structure raised thereon will be as evanescent as a dream if it does not rest on the righteousness that exalteth a nation.[8]

[8] Address in Lutheran Church, Washington, D. C., January 29, 1905.

Here is clearly indicated, not only one of the great functions of the Christian Church, but likewise one of the great services of the Bible. For the inculcation of righteousness and the Christian spirit, the Bible will continue to be, as it has been, the chief instrument wielded by the church. In the reverent, ethical, loving influence which it exerts; in the lofty conceptions which it inculcates; in the strength which it imparts; and in the insight which it gives, we shall be enabled, if we use it intelligently and lay to heart its true lessons, to maintain the highest ideals and the most worthy tendencies of our western civilization in the countries where it has developed.

3. As this civilization spreads abroad, in and through the people who go into distant lands for whatsoever purpose, having dealings with other nations, it must inevitably bear, in one way or another, the influence of the Bible; while more and more, as Christian missions extend, the Book itself will be used, circulated, and studied among the numerous races and kindreds of the earth. In this vast, outlying field it will help to form the *new ideals* which will slowly grow up in the changing life of such alien divisions of the human family. Not wholly will they accept it, perhaps; certainly they will put their own interpretations upon it, and not ours; and undoubtedly its messages to them will be all the more helpful when blended with, and somewhat mod-

ified by, the truth and beauty which have inhered in their forms of thought and faith. Nevertheless it will serve to give them new and inspiring conceptions—of the fatherhood of God, of the brotherhood of man, of immortality; it will quicken the sense of sin and holiness; it will instil the love of righteousness and peace; it will emancipate and elevate woman; it will purify, dignify and sanctify the home; it will make for liberty, equality, fraternity, and lead eventually—far off—to the abolition of slavery and war. At least it will hold up the ideals of such sublime attainments before the various peoples of the earth; and so, by degrees, it will teach them to live and labor for the establishment of the kingdom of heaven, the universal reign of righteousness and love, among the children of men. Thus it will tend to vitalize and spiritualize the older civilizations, to overcome barbarism and savagery, and to lift human life everywhere into the sunshine of divine love.

In order that the Bible, going forth with our western civilization, and in a measure representing it, may the more speedily render this exalted service and win its legitimate place of power, it must be commended and not belied by the conduct of the people who have been reared under its influence. In the commingling of races and international interests which is to be the most distinguishing phenomenon of the immediate

future, intimately concerning the welfare of all peoples, great and small, it is of the very highest importance that the exponents of our western civilization, known as Christians and educated in the Bible, *should be true to their ideals.* Nothing can more efficiently help them to do this than the Bible itself, while nothing can more justly enable our civilization to win its true supremacy among the nations.

Yet, in spite of all delinquencies in this respect, "the word of God standeth sure." The truth in the Bible, because it is truth, may be trusted to win its way; likewise the truth about the Bible. Evil is still powerful in our civilization and century, as it has always been; human nature is imperfect, and error darkens much of our thought and teaching. Nevertheless the exalted spiritual ideals of the Bible still make, and will continue to make, a mighty appeal to the human soul, and constitute the surest leverage we possess for lifting ourselves and the world to a higher plane. So we may expect them, approving themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God, to teach mankind, by degrees, through the ages, the wickedness and foolishness of wrong-doing, the futility of error, the wastefulness of strife; and, on the other hand, the value of the riches of righteousness, the beauty of holiness, the splendor of truth, the glory of spiritual freedom, the blessedness of peace and

brotherhood, and the everlasting worth of the human soul made in the Divine image and endued with "the power of an endless life."

As we thus contemplate the vast field awaiting the Bible, the beneficent service which it is capable of rendering, and the facilities now afforded for its rapidly increasing circulation, we are thrilled by the vision of its marvelous opportunities for spiritual usefulness; and as we reflect that at length it is being emancipated from the thraldom of erroneous conceptions of its nature and meaning, and from the constriction of false systems of dogma which have often surrounded it, we may rejoice with exceeding great joy to believe that this ancient Sacred Literature, far from having finished its work, is but just entering upon its largest and most glorious mission among the nations.

Word of life, most pure and strong,
Lo! for thee the nations long;
Spread, till from its dreary night
All the world awakes to light.

Lord of all men, let there be
Joy and strength to work for thee;
Let the nations far and near
See thy light, and learn thy fear.

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